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EUGENE ARAM:

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS,

By W. T. MONCRIEFF, Esq.

Author of the Diamond Arrow Giovanni in London,
Tom and Jerry. Monsieur Tonson, &c.

PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY

With Remarks, Biographical & Critical,

BY D—G.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A DESCRIPTION of the COSTUME, Cast of the
CHARACTERS, ENTRANCES and EXITS, RELATIVE
POSITIONS of the Performers on the Stage, and
the whole of the STAGE BUSINESS, as now per-
formed in the METROPOLITAN MINOR THEATRES.

Embellished with

A FINE WOOD ENGRAVING,

BY MR. BONNER,

from

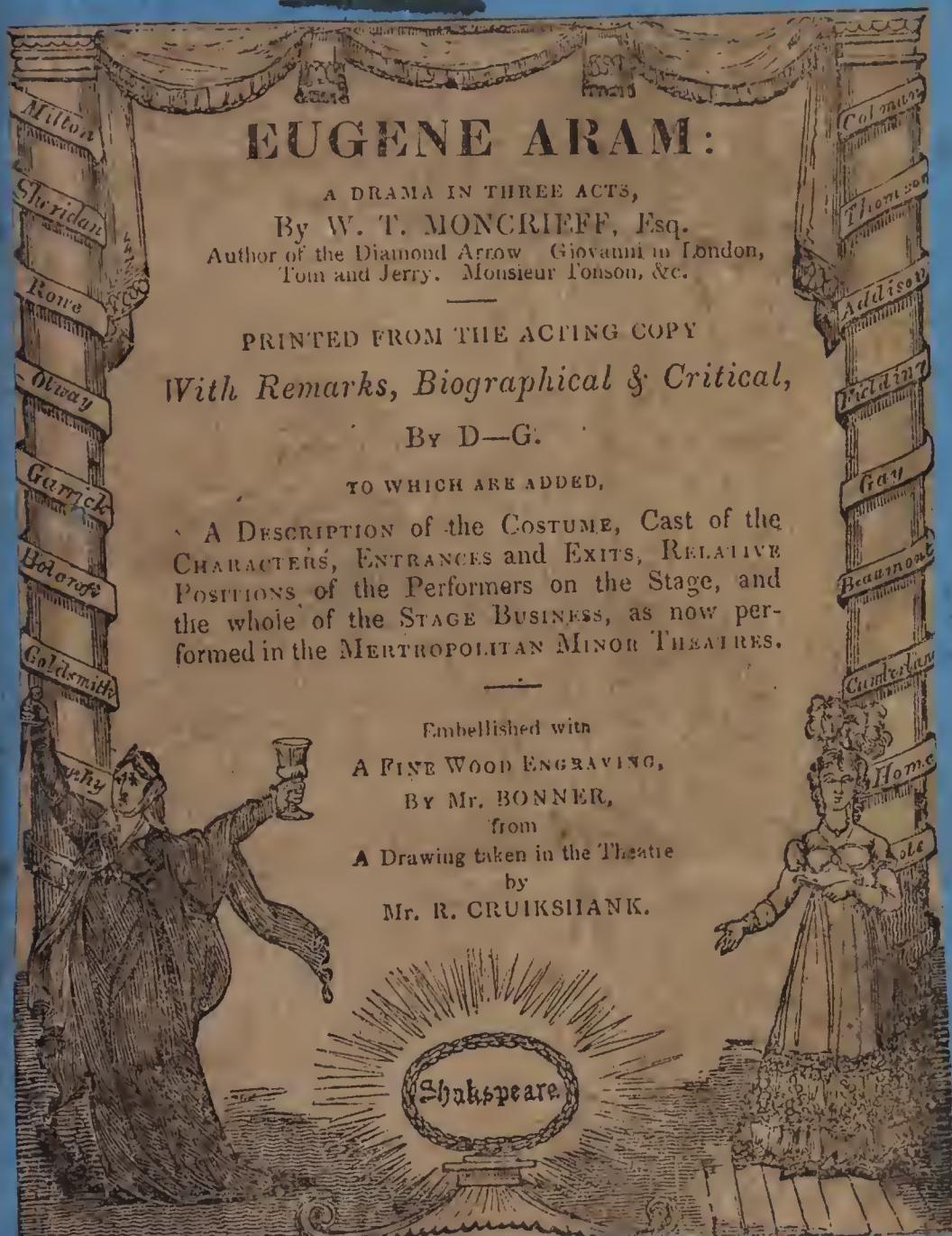
A Drawing taken in the Theatre

by

MR. R. CRUIKSHANK.



Shakspeare





C Edwards



Eugene Aram.

Houseman. Release my throat, or you will commit murder!

Act I. Scene 3.

EUGENE ARAM,
OR, SAINT ROBERT'S CAVE:
A DRAMA,
In Three Acts,
BY W. T. MONCRIEFF, ESQ.,

Author of Gipsy Jack, Monsieur Tonson, Diamond Arrow, Giovanni in London, Rochester, The Spectre Bridegroom, Pestilence of Marseilles, Somnambulist, All at Coventry, Cataract of the Ganges, The Lear of Private Life, Shakespeare's Festival, The Beggar of Cripplegate, Van Diemen's Land, Shipwreck of the Medusa, &c.

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BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY D.—G.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME,—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS,—
ENTRANCES AND EXITS,—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE
PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE
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As performed at the
THEATRES ROYAL, LONDON.

EMBELLISHED WITH A FINE ENGRAVING,

From a Drawing taken in the Theatre.

LONDON :
DAVIDSON, PETER'S HILL, DOCTORS' COMMONS,
BETWEEN ST. PAUL'S AND UPPER THAMES STREET.

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REMARKS.

Eugene Aram.

MR. THOMAS HOOD, one of the most popular humorists of the present day, first called the public attention to the story of Eugene Aram, in a ballad written with considerable power ; Mr. Lytton Bulwer amplified it in three thick octavos ; and Mr. Moncrieff has introduced it on the stage, in a drama built on the octavos in question, but varied and compressed with his usual knowledge of stage effect. As some account of this extraordinary scholar and culprit cannot but prove interesting, we subjoin a few particulars from an autobiographical sketch that he left behind him.

Eugene Aram was born at Ramsgill, a small village in Netherdale, in 1704. His family was of high antiquity, being originally lords of the town of Haram, or Aram, on the southern banks of the Tees, in the reign of Edward the Third. Several of his ancestors served as high sheriffs for the county of York. At Bondgate, near Ripon, he received his first rudiments of education, and studied mathematics ; and at the age of sixteen, he was clerk to Mr. Christopher Blacket, of London. Literature was the employment of his leisure hours ; and the toils of the counting-house were pleasantly relieved by the study of philosophy and the belles lettres. After remaining in London for a year or two, he returned to his native place, became schoolmaster, and married.

He resolved to make himself master of the learned languages. Beginning with the Latin, by a long course of diligent and laborious study, he read all the classics, historians, and poets. He then perfected himself in the Greek Testament, and subsequently in Hesiod, Homer, Theocritus, Herodotus, Thucydides, and all the Greek tragedians.

In the year 1734, William Norton, Esq. invited him to Knaresborough, where his dreadful crime was perpetrated. He now began to study Hebrew with all the intense ar-

dour that distinguished his former efforts. In 1745, he returned to London, and became usher in latin and writing to the Rev. Mr. Painblanc, in Piccadilly. From this gentleman he acquired the French language. He afterwards filled several usherships in different parts of the south of England ; and, being resolved to let slip no opportunity of adding to his immense store of general knowledge, he turned herald and botanist. As if to show how far the amazing resources of his mind could be taxed, he next tried the Chaldee and Arabic, and mastered them in turn ; and, to crown this unexampled application, he investigated the Celtic (the root of his own language), as far as it was practicable, through all its dialects ; and, having collected more than one thousand notes, which he intended as the substratum of a comparative lexicon, showing the affinity which the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Chaldee, Arabic, and Celtic, bore to each other, he carved out for himself incessant labour for many anticipated years ; when his progress was stopped by the hand of the executioner.

In the year 1745, Daniel Clarke, a shoemaker of Knaresborough, Eugene Aram, a schoolmaster of the same place, and Richard Houseman, a flax-dresser, entered into a conspiracy to defraud several persons of goods and plate, which Clarke, who was then newly married, was to borrow, under the pretence of making a show with at his wedding. The scheme was successful ; and some suspicious circumstances having transpired, a report became general that Clarke had absconded. Rewards were offered for his apprehension, but without effect ; and nothing further was heard of him. A portion of the goods thus fraudulently obtained was found on Houseman's premises, and another part was dug up in Aram's garden. The schoolmaster, who, before this, had been in abject poverty, suddenly became flush of money, and quitted Knaresborough.

On the 1st of August, 1758, a labourer, digging for stone at a place called Thistle Hill, near Knaresborough, exhumated part of a skeleton, which many of the inhabitants pronounced to be that of Clarke. The wife of Aram had often darkly hinted that Houseman and her husband had been the assassins of the shoemaker ; and several persons testified that they were the last who had been seen on the night in question with the missing man. But

“Murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ.”

Houseman, who, by order of the coroner, was present at the inquest, turned pale, faltered in his speech, and, at the sight of the skeleton, exclaimed, "This is no more Dan Clarke's bone than it is mine!" This was considered an evidence of his guilt: he was placed in custody; and a subsequent confession, that Eugene Aram had murdered Clarke, and buried his body in a place called St. Robert's Cave, near Grimble Bridge, where, after due search, the remains were found, entitled him to turn king's evidence against his confederate, who was immediately committed to York Castle, tried, and—though his defence was a master-piece of ingenious sophistry, so ingenious, that Archdeacon Paley, who was present, pronounced it of consummate ability—he was found guilty, and hung in chains on Knaresborough Forest, August 6, 1759.

Such are the particulars of this remarkable catastrophe, which, looking to the peculiar character of the perpetrator, is without a parallel in the annals of crime. Vengeance had no share in this murder, neither had the dread of discovery; for one witness still lived to bear evidence against the culprit. It must have been an intensely morbid desire to make a shorter division of the booty, and thus place himself above that pinching penury which had soured and perverted his mind, and wrought it to such a pitch of gloomy ferocity, without impairing its wholesome energies. It is melancholy to reflect that so much assiduity, learning, and genius, should have dwelt with so dark a spirit.

This drama was listened to with attention; it was acted perfectly to the satisfaction of the author and the audience; and Mr. Lytton Bulwer, who was in the boxes at the Surrey on the first night of the performance, testified in no equivocal manner his approbation of the players and the piece.



D.—G.

Cast of the Characters,

As originally sustained at the Surrey Theatre.

Eugene Aram.....	Mr. Elton.
Rowland Lester	Mr. Williams.
Richard Houseman	Mr. C. Hill
Walter Lester	Mr. Cobham.
Corporal Bunting.....	Mr. Vale.
Peter Dealtry	Mr. Rogers.
Squire Courtland	Mr. Dibdin Pitt.
Liptrap (<i>Landlord of the Raven, at Knaresboro'</i>)	Mr. Honner.
Hayward.....	Mr. Maitland.
Summers	Mr. Ransford.
Tebbut.....	Mr. Lee.
Blacklock and Allbone (<i>Associates of House-</i> <i>man</i>).....	Messrs. Almar and Asbury
Thomas (<i>Servant to Lester</i>)	Mr. Gardner.
John (<i>Servant to Courtland</i>).....	Mr. Grammer.
Gaoler	Mr. Young.
<i>Constables, Villagers, &c. &c.</i>	
Madeline Lester	Mrs. W. West.
Ellinor Lester	Miss Vincent.
Bess Airlie	Madame Simon.
Dame Darkmans	Miss Nicols.
Margery (<i>Housekeeper to Aram</i>)	Mrs. Rogers.
Sal Hammond.....	Miss Jordan.

COSTUME.

EUGENE ARAM.—Scholastic black suit of the last century.
See Heryey's illustrations to Hood's Eugene Aram's Dream.

ROWLAND LESTER.—White old fashioned suit, such as worn
by the old English squires eighty years since.

WALTER LESTER.—Blue coat, braided with gold; white
breeches and long boots—laced cravat.

HOUSEMAN.—Brown country coat and breeches; leather belt;
high boots; rough old fashioned top coat.

CORPORAL BUNTING.—Military undress of the period.

PETER DEALTRY.—Parish clerk's black suit; worsted stockings;
shoes, buckles, and landlord's green baize apron.

SQUIRE COURTLAND—Old gentleman's antique grey dress.

ALLBONE, BLACKLOCK, SUMMERS, &c. the usual dresses
of the time.

MADELINE LESTER.—*First dress*—White satin petticoat; blue
satin open and black body trimmed with beads, &c. *Second dress*
—White satin full dress.

ELLINOR LESTER.—*First dress*—Amber satin dress with beads,
the fashion of George the Second's time. *Second dress*—White satin
bridesmaid's dress.

BESS AIRLIE, SAL HAMMOND, GIPSIES, &c. the usual
dresses.

EUGENE ARAM.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Exterior of the "Spotted Dog" Public House in Grassdale Hamlet.—Sunset.—Villagers discovered carousing.*

"A sequestered hamlet, which I have often sought occasion to pass, and which I have never left without a certain reluctance and regret."—VIDE NOVEL.

SONNET GLEE.—VILLAGERS.

Night hurries on, the day is dying,
The breezes soft and sad are sighing,
Athwart the lake a gloom is spreading,
Dank tears of dew the clouds are shedding ;
The flowers, in sorrow, shroud their beauty,
And droop their heads with vestal duty,
For light's departure only grieving ;
Shall thusmute nature mourn day's leaving,
Nor we, its cheering radiance losing,
Awake one strain to mourn its closing ?
No ! fill a bumper, the dearest and last,
To the hours that away are now fleeting fast,
Then hence to our homes by eve's fading light,
And sigh to the day that is gone—good-night !

[*Exeunt R.—and L.*

Enter PETER DEALTRY and CORPORAL JACOB BUNTING from house.

Bunt. Augh ! very sensible fellows those, Master Landlord,—had their allowance, and now turned into their quarters to be ready for drill to-morrow.

Deal. Aye, drilling turnips, Mr. Corporal Jacob Bunting ; the men, truly, are very well, and good customers, if they were not quite such hard swearers—but what says those nice lines in worthy Dr. Drivel's hymn :

Oaths are the debts your spendthrift soul must pay,
All scores are chalk'd against the reckoning day.

Bunt. Psha ! send all verses to the right-about—only fit for girls going to school o' Sundays—full grown men more up to snuff. I've seen the world, Master Dealtry—the world, and be d—d to you ! Commander-in-Chief's no martinet. If we're all right in action—he'll wink at a slip word or two—hold jaw—hate humbug—baugh !

Deal. Neighbour, neighbour, this is profane !

Bunt. Hark'ye, Peter,—you're publican and sinner—parish clerk and psalm-singer—cursed bad mixture—augh !—Long measure at church, and short measure at home: d'ye take ?—too much Sternhold and Hopkins in one—too little malt and hops in t'other,—baugh !

Deal. He! he ! he ! Neighbour, you joke !

Bunt. Hey! what devil cackling at ?—always grin—grin—grin, giggle—giggle—giggle !—baugh !

Deal. You must allow a man to laugh a little now and then.

Bunt. Man ! *Man's* a noble animal—a musket, primed, loaded—ready to help a friend or kill a foe,—charge not to be wasted on every tom-tit ! But you ! not a musket but a cracker!—noisy, harmless ! can't touch you but off you go, whiz, pop, bang in one's face,—baugh !

Deal. Master Aram, the great scholar, who lives down in the vale yonder, is the man for you—he's one after your own heart—not very easy to make him laugh !

Bunt. After my heart—stoops like a gander.

Deal. He does look down when he walks, certainly—when I think, I do the same ; but what a marvelous man he is ;—why he reads the psalms in Hebrew—and then so affable !

Bunt. Augh ! tell you what—seen the world, Master Dealtry,—know a thing or two—shy dog, always a deep one ! Give me a man who looks me in the face as he would a cannon.

Deal. Or a pretty girl ! Master Bunting, eh ?

Bunt. Ah !—talking of pretty girls, what a creature Miss Lester is ! Such eyes ! such nose ! fit for a colonel, by gad ! aye, or a major general.

Deal. Hum ! for my part, I think her sister, Miss Ellinor, the handsomest ; not so grand like, perhaps, but more lovesome.

Bunt. Nice little thing, certainly, but eh ! who have we here ? customer for you—rum customer too, baugh !

Enter HOUSEMAN, L.

Deal. [aside.] Hum ! I must look sharp after my reckoning here.

House. [taking up jug on table and emptying it, to Bunting and Dealtry's great astonishment.] You are the land-lord of this house, friend, if I may guess by your appearance.

[to Dealtry.]

Deal. Yes, I am the landlord, friend ; what may you want ? you can have any thing here—for money !

House. I want refreshment, I am way worn and faint ; my looks may be a little rough perhaps, but I can pay.

[*shews purse.*

Deal. Hum ! plenty of coin—want refreshment—way worn and faint ?—I'll supply you instantly, yes, yes !

By him the beasts that loosely range

With timely food are fed ;

He speaks the word, and what he wills

Is done as soon as said !

Here, wife, some ale !

[*Exit into house.*

House. I would obtain some information here, friend ; mayhap you can supply me !

Bunt. Shouldn't wonder—seen the world—know a thing or two—hate humbug !—wait till the ale comes—bad talking without drinking—can't bear it—baugh !

Re-enter DEALTRY with refreshments.

Deal. Now, friend, here's the ale, some of my own brewing, some bread of my maid's baking, and some beef of my wife's corning ! so you see, you have it all in the family way !

Bunt. I'll take a draught with you, friend. My service to you. [*drinks.*] Psha ! not half enough ale—only a quart, a thimble full, baugh !

House. This is a very pretty retired spot you live in, friends, very snug and private indeed. Whose neat old house was that I passed on the green, with the gable ends and the flower-pots in front.

Deal. Oh, that's the 'Squire's—Squire Lester, a very worthy gentleman—always joins in the psalms.

House. Indeed !—He's rich, 'ent he ?—his house seems the best I've seen for some miles.

Bunt. He's no beggar, friend, depend upon that—something in the strong box for a rainy day.

House. Any family ?

Deal. Two daughters, who keep his house, (he's a widower) and a nephew, whose father Geoffry Lester—a sad pickle—never went to church—disappeared some years since, and has never been heard of from that time to this.

House. Singular !—they don't keep many servants ?

Deal. Two maids and a boy—but they're always ready to entertain a visitor !—especially a poor one.

House. I'm glad to hear that;—another jug of ale, landlord ! [*Dealtry fetches ale.*]

Bunt. Baugh ! this fellow's as inquisitive as a court martial—doesn't spare the liquor, though—seen the world, no doubt o' that.

House. Are there no other principal persons living about here—that is, barring yourselves ?

Deal. Why, yes, there's the great scholar—the learned man yonder ;—you may just catch a glimpse of the tall what-d'ye-call-it he has built out on the top of his house, that he may get nearer to the stars ! He's got glasses by which, I've heard, you may see the people in the moon walking on their heads—though I can't say I believe it.

Bunt. All humbug !—baugh !

House. This scholar isn't, I suppose, very rich—few scholars are.

Bunt. Hum !—he's not poor,—and then they say he's going to marry the squire's eldest daughter, we told you of, Miss Madeline—for my part, I think she'd better marry her cousin Walter—he's fond of her—but this scholar, what do scholars know about women ?—baugh !

Deal. Nay, but every body speaks well of Eugene Aram, Master Corporal.

House. What Aram ?—did you say Aram ?—Eugene Aram ?

Bunt. Eh ! you know him, do you ?—you've heard of him ?

House. Found at last ! and here—strange chance !

Bunt. Why, man, you stare as if you had seen an apparition.

House. Your pardon :—I knew Eugene in early life—we were acquaintances—I may say, friends ;—we have not met for years,—I knew not where to find him,—I've business with him. To light upon him thus—so unexpectedly—'tis odd—'tis fortunate. Landlord—your reckoning ; I must away at once—which is the road to this—this famous scholar's, eh ?

Bunt. Ulloa ! stealing a march !—going to desert !

Deal. Cross the stile you'll find at your right there ; then wind along the foot of the hill for about three parts of a mile, and in the middle of a broad plain you'll see a lonely grey house with a thingumbob a-top of it, a servatory they call it—that's Master Aram's.

House. I thank you,—I'll off at once.

Deal. I'll help you on with your coat.

[Takes up great coat, which Houseman has pulled off when he entered;—pair of large horse pistols fall from the pockets.

Bunt. Eh! what the devil! fire arms! pistols!—why you're not in the service, friend?

House. Confusion!—I—I—that is, I have been—I always travel armed,—there are many bad characters about.

Bunt. Right, right, and very near too—baugh!

House. We shall meet again,—farewell! Now, Aram, comrade—once more we'll hold counsel. [Exit hastily.

Bunt. Cursed queer chap that!—says he's been in the service—never told what regiment. Set me a talking, and let out nothing himself—old soldier, every inch of him, and I not to see it—baugh!

Deal. He can take care of number one;—how he emptied the jug!—and my stars! what an appetite!

Bunt. Tush!—hold jaw!—knows a thing or two—man of the world, that's clear. But come, let's in and have another jug of ale;—made me quite dry, so much talking—baugh! [Exit with Dealtry into house.

SCENE II.—*Gardens of Lester Hall, by moonlight.*

THE SISTERS' CONFERENCE.

“ I do not know any thing in the world more lovely than such conferences between two beings who have no secrets to relate but what arise all fresh from the springs of a guiltless heart.”—NOVEL.

Enter MADELINE and ELLINOR, R.

Mad. We staid too long, dear Nell—we should have vanished with the cloth,—our presence checked the circuit of their wine:—and yet Eugene's discourse—who would not tarry when he talks?

Ell. It is, I own, seductive, Madeline;—how his features brighten when he speaks;—I think him positively handsome when he converses.

Mad. Oh, more than handsome, sister—with that high pale brow, and those deep unfathomable eyes!

Ell. I confess there is something about him that inspires all around him with an indescribable interest; yet,—but still, though his manner is cold at times, he is so gentle, that—

Mad. And then his voice, 'tis so like music—though what music can so charm and touch the heart?—his language and ideas, too, so different from the words and thoughts of others.

Ell. He has bewitched you, Madeline,—you are infatuated, sister.

Mad. That any one should think they have known to me, that have not loved him!

Ell. Are there not others, then, as worthy?

Mad. Can you ask, sister?—whom would you compare with, nay, place within a hundred grades of the proud height which Eugene Aram holds in the little world?

Ell. This is folly—dotage;—surely there are others as gentle and as kind, and if not as wise, more fitted for the business of this life!

Mad. You mock me!—name one!

Ell. If I said Walter Lester—

Mad. Walter the equal of Eugene!

Ell. Aye, and more than equal, if it must be said; though he has only eyes for you, and a heart for you, that neglect, despise his love, while I—I—but no matter—I am a weak, foolish girl,—forgive me, as you always do. Indeed I need your kindness—I am very, very unhappy!

Mad. Unhappy, dearest Nell!—ah! I perceive—'tis I should claim forgiveness.

Ell. Some one approaches—doubtless they have left the dinner-table. You shall know all another time—we must to dress—you know you have promised Eugene a moonlight stroll through the forest—he will be waiting; but not so Walter;—you are happy, sister, and I—I am very, very foolish.

Mad. Nay, now, Nell—dear sister, rely on Madeline's heart;—come—now come! [*Exit with Ellinor, L.*

Enter OLD LESTER and WALTER, R.

Les. Tut, tut! Walter, never tell me—I feel, for the first time in these ten years, that I have a right to scold you! What on earth, boy, could make you so inhospitable to your uncle's guest?—Why you eyed our poor student Aram, as if you wished him burnt amongst the books of Alexandria.

Wal. A cold pedantic egotist!

Les. Heyday! Nephew—nephew—well, I never suspected you capable of meanness before.

Wal. Meanness, sir?

Les. Aye, is it not meanness to be jealous of superior acquirements, instead of admiring them?

Wal. What has been the use of those acquirements, sir?—has he benefited mankind by them?—the mere creature of books—the dry and sterile collector of other

men's learning. And Madeline calls him handsome, too; grant me patience, heaven!

Les. Nay, 'tis natural she should;—you must doubtless have observed of late the attachment which, in spite of his habitual reserve and self-control, our gifted neighbour nourishes towards her.

Wal. I have indeed observed it, sir. [sighs.]

Les. Formerly, my dear boy, I used to hope that one time or another my dear Madeline and yourself might have formed a nearer connexion than that of cousins. I was disappointed; but I am now consoled, for I think there is that in Ellinor which may be more calculated to make you happy—that is, should the bias of your fancy chance to tend that way.

Wal. You are very good, sir; but I cannot say I feel much flattered by your selection, or see why the least brilliant of the two sisters must necessarily be the fittest for me!

Les. Well, well, I meant not to offend you;—this is a matter in which relations should not interfere. You are, of course, at full liberty to choose throughout the world whom you may prefer.

Wal. Choose throughout the world!—how in this nook am I to see the world?

Les. Walter!—nephew!—you speak reproachfully!

Wal. I am young, sir—my temper is restless,—I have a love of enterprize and adventure;—is it not natural, then, that I should wish to see the world? Besides, I have no busines here,—Madeline—this mysterious Aram;—no, no, 'tis time I were away!

Les. A painful thought comes o'er me!—would to heaven I may be wrong! Have you, Walter, ever felt for Madeline more than—

Wal. Oh, spare me!—spare me!

Les. Heaven comfort thee, poor boy!—I never dreamt of this,—you have my free consent to leave us: in change of scene you may find joy again;—go, Walter, when you will.

Wal. To-morrow, sir.

Les. It shall be so. Poor boy—poor boy!—I'll leave you to your thoughts and haste the preparations.

[*Exit, R.*

Wal. Yes, yes, 'tis fit I fly these scenes,—scorned and despised, despised for one, too, whom my soul loathes, almost unknowing why—loathes with a feeling stronger

than of rivalry ; and then, were there no other cause, my father's fate—his strange mysterious disappearance ! —I have spent days in guesses at his destiny—passed nights in dreams that for me was reserved the proud task of its discovery. 'Tis a task worthy of me,—I may find him rich—distinguished—for he was ever strangely fortunate. All I could learn of him since he last left his home—the names that he assumed—the spots he last was seen in—I've noted down most carefully ; and—ah ! Aram coming, and alone ! what is it makes me shun this man, yet draws me to him ?—I will retire—and yet I cannot leave.

[*draws back.*]

Enter EUGENE ARAM, L.

Aram. 'Tis eve !—the stars are all abroad, bathing the living atmosphere with solemn light!—above, about, around ! ye mystic lights, worlds upon worlds !—infinite, incalculable ! can we look upon you, note your appointed order, and your unvarying course, and not feel that we are indeed the poorest puppets of an all pervading and resistless destiny ?—all must walk onwards to their goal—the colours of our existence were doomed before our birth—our sorrows and our crimes ! What, then, is crime ?—fate !—what life ?—submission ! Why should I muse, then, on the past ?—however damning, and however dread, 'twas pre-ordained—'tis done !

Wal. I must speak to him—I cannot away.

[*advances, R.*

Aram. Ha ! confusion ! Walter Lester ! [*aside.*]—eavesdropping,—you overheard me, did you ?—well, well what said I—what said I ?

Wal. I am not one to play the listener, more especially to the learned ravings of a man who can conceal nothing I care to know. I was here unintentionally.

Aram. But surely, surely I spoke aloud—did I not—did I not ?

Wal. You did, but so incoherently and indistinctly, that I could not profit by your indiscretion. I cannot plagiarize from any scholastic designs you might have been giving vent to ;—but if my presence offends you, and it may be that the offence is mutual, I am about to leave you.

Aram. I regret to hear it ;—I never see the impetuous and yearning spirit of youth without a painful interest. How feeble is the chance that its hopes will be

fulfilled!—Nay, frown not, sir—there's no occasion for resentment.

Wal. I am not aware by what right or on what grounds you assume towards me the superiority, not only of admonition, but reproof! But since you have taken upon yourself to caution me, let me tell you that it may be as well for you to bear as clear a conscience, and as untouched a spirit, as that which now I boast; and with which, I trust in heaven and my own soul, I shall return to my native place. It is not the holy only that love solitude; and men may shun the world from other motives than philosophy.

Aram. Boy! were there meaning in your words, I should, mark me, avenge the insult;—as it is, I despise it!—go!

[crosses, R.

Wal. Hold!—you have given me the opportunity I have so long desired! You, yourself, have now broken the peace that existed between us, and which to me was more bitter than wormwood! You have dared—yes, dared to use threatening language towards me!—I call on you to fulfil your threat! I tell you that I meant, I designed, I thirsted to affront you!—now resent my purposed premeditated affront as you can and will!

Aram. Hum! you *designed* to affront me!—It is well—it is a noble confession; and wherefore? I have offended you—I have incurred your hatred!—why?—what are my sins?

Wal. Do you ask the cause? Have you not traversed my views—blighted my hopes—charmed away from me the affections which were more to me than the world, and driven me to wander from my home with a crushed spirit and a cheerless heart?—are these no cause for hate?

Aram. Have I done this?—have I so injured you?—'tis true, I know it—I perceive it!—I read your heart; and, bear witness, heaven! I feel for the wound that I, but with no guilty hand, inflict upon you!—Yet be just,—have I been insolent in triumph or haughty in success?—if so, hate me!—nay, spurn me now!

Wal. It is enough!—let us part, sir;—I leave you with more soreness at my late haste than I will acknowledge!—let that content you—for myself, I ask for no apology, or—

Aram. But you shall have it amply;—you leave us, it may be some time ere we meet again;—take, at least, my hand at parting!

[extends his left hand.

Wal. Your left hand, sir!—is there any superstition that makes you think, as some of the ancients did, your left hand luckier than your right? [crosses, to R.]

Aram. There is a superstition—but no matter, sir;—farewell!

Wal. Strange, inexplicable being!—that thus can generate our sympathy and awe, farewell! [Exit, R.]

Aram. Soh! I was not overheard; this habit must be cured—our thoughts, like nuns, ought not to go abroad without a veil. 'Tis a fine youth that Walter,—I never was so young at heart—I was—but what matters it—who is answerable for his nature?—who can say I controlled all the circumstances that made me what I am?—Madeline—heavens! did I bring on myself this temptation?—When I dream, she is with me—when I wake, I am haunted by her image—and yet I ought to weave my lot with none!—memory sets me apart and alone in the world!—but Madeline—hence! let me lose these dark thoughts in her presence;—aye, aye—away, away!

[Exit, L.]

SCENE III.—*Forest of Grassdale;—evening.*

"The evening had already deepened into night, along the sear and melancholy wood—the autumnal winds crept with a lowly but gathering moan."—NOVEL.

Enter HOUSEMAN, L. U. E. followed by BLACKLOCK and ALLBONE, two desperadoes.

House. Aye, boys, we must to work ere the news of our exploits at Checkington reaches here, and puts the natives on their guard! the Manor House must be our first point of attack; you forth and reconnoitre—I have other business.

Black. The alehouse, Houseman?

House. No, a pal; I have turned up a friend here, one I little dreamt to meet—Aram—Eugene Aram—we've worked together on the High Toby Gloak! been in a ramp and—but I mustn't split. I've a sure bank in him; aye—he dares not refuse—footsteps! away! we'll meet down in the glen, at twelve—keep tryste, and be awake.

All. Aye, aye! staunch as steel,

[Exit, L. U. E. with Blacklock.]

House. Who comes? Aram himself, and with a petticoat; that's new, for he was wont to shun them. Yes, I would swear to him! He'll stare to see me here—perhaps

won't be much pleased ! no matter—I'll lye close a bit.
 [retires to the back.]

Enter ARAM and MADELINE, R.

Aram. Yes, my own beautiful love, if you have selected one whom the world might deem a strange choice for youth and loveliness like yours, you have at least selected one who can have no idol but yourself.

Mad. I do believe so, dear Eugene.

Aram. Oh, my dear Madeline, could you know how different life has become to me since I knew you ! Formerly, I will frankly own, I had forebodings at my heart,—aye, dark and heavy ones ; the cloud was more familiar to me than the sun-shine. But now I have grown a child, and can see nothing around me but hope—my life was winter, your love has breathed it into spring.

Mad. And yet, Eugene, yet—

Aram. Yet what, my Madeline ?

Mad. There are still moments when I have no power over your thoughts—moments when you break away from me, when you mutter to yourself feelings in which I have no share, and which seem to steal the consciousness from your eye, and the colour from your lip.

Aram. Ah, do you then watch me so closely ?

Mad. Can you wonder that I do ?

Aram. You must not, you must not. I cannot bear too nice and sudden a scrutiny. I have long clung to a solitary independence of thought, which allow no watch, and forbids account of itself to any one ;—leave it to time, and your love, to win their inevitable way. And mark, mark, I pray you, whenever, in spite of myself, these moods you refer to, darken over me, heed not, listen not. Leave me—solitude is their only cure. Promise me this, love—promise !—

Mad. It is a harsh request.

Aram. From the depths of my soul, I implore you grant it—yea, to the very letter.

Mad. Nay, nay, this is—that fearful gaze. Well, well, Eugene, I promise—

House. Love patter, I must cut this. [aside, then advances, L.—] Good evening, Eugene Aram.

Aram. [aside, starting.] Perdition ! Houseman here. Yes, yes, 'tis he, his memory is written on my soul in blood ! what demon chance !—

Mad. Aram, Eugene—this agitation !

Aram. Fool, fool ! pardon me a moment ! Want you aught with me ?

House. Aye, aye, a trifle when you can quite spare time.

Enter LESTER and ELLINOR, R.

Les. You have outstripped us, we half feared we'd lost you.

Aram. Confusion thickens—we are observed—draw back a while—in a few moments— [aside to Houseman.

House. Oh, I can wait. [draws back.

Ell. Who is that fearful looking stranger ?

Aram. Eh, oh ! he is a man whom I knew well some fourteen years ago. He has been unfortunate ! travelling this route, he learnt my sojourn here and seeks my aid.

Mad. That all—his presence chills me !

Aram. Believe it—

Les. A strange looking fellow, faith—but being a friend of yours he can't be undeserving ; if he is poor, y purse—

Aram. Nay, nay, I can supply him ! but night draws on—

Les. You will return and sup with us ?

Aram. No, not to night—you will take care of Madeline—dear sir, I leave you now, love ; I have business, aye, of moment—

Les. Well, well, if you wont—

Ell. Walter will meet us in the village.

Aram. Aye, have a care, there may be danger. Farewell, dear love, the night air's chill, farewell, farewell !

Mad. This wildness—what dread presentiment wakes in my heart ? I fear, I know not why ! Farewell !

Les. Aye, aye, good night !—You'll see us in the morning ?

Aram. If alive !

Les. Let us away, you see he's in the mood.

Ell. Walter has no such moods—heigho !

[*Exeunt Lester, Madeline, and Ellinor, R.*

Aram. Gone ! gone ! I breathe again ! Now, Houseman, now what would you ?

House. I tarried for you here, Aram, in preference to seeking you at home ; there are certain private reasons which make it prudent I should keep as much as possible among the owls.

Aram. What curse has brought you hither ? did you not say, when last we parted, you were about to settle with a relation among the mountains of Wales ?

House. And so I meant, but fate, as you would say, or the devil, as I should, ordered it otherwise. I hadn't long left you, when I fell in with some old friends—bold spirits and true, the brave outlaws of the road and field!—why make a long tale of it?—I joined them—entrusted myself to their guidance; since then we have cruised around the country—regaled ourselves cheerily—frightened the timid—silenced the fractious, and, by the help of your fate, or my devil, have found ourselves, by accident, in this very district, honoured by the dwelling place of my learned friend, Eugene Aram!

Aram. Trifle not with me, Houseman!—I scarcely yet understand you;—do you mean to imply that yourself, and the lawless associates you say you have joined, are lying out for plunder in these parts?

House. You've hit it;—perhaps you heard of our exploits, last night, some few miles hence?

Aram. Ha! practising your villainy so near!

House. Villainy!—come, come, Master Aram, these words must not pass between you and me—friends of such date, and on such footing.

Aram. Talk not of the past, nor call those whom destiny drove down her dark tide in momentary companionship by the name of friends;—friends we are not! but while we live there is a tie between us stronger than that of friendship!

House. You say truly; but, for my part, I care not whether we be friends or foes.

Aram. Foes!—no, no, *we may not* be foes, Houseman.—But look you, I cannot live and have my life thus darkened by your presence;—why haunt each other?—does not a ghastly air, a charnel breath, hover about us both? All earth spreads wide before you!—choose your pursuits and your resting-place elsewhere, but grudge me not this little spot of refuge here.

House. I have no wish to disturb you, Eugene Aram, but I *must* live!—if I desert my companions I shall starve; they will not linger long here, a week, it may be a fortnight at the most; in a word, after we have swept the country, we are gone!

Aram. Houseman—Houseman! beware!—speak not to me of tarrying here—talk not to me of days and weeks, every hour of which would sound a death-knell in my ears!—Renounce your lawless deeds—reflect on the chances of apprehension and a shameful death!

House. And a full confession of all my past sins! After the parson, the *Clarke* may follow, eh! Eugene?

Aram. [seizing him by the throat.] Fiend! devil! breathe not another word of such import!—dare again to menace me with the vengeance of such a thing as thou! and by the heaven above us I will lay thee dead at my feet!

House. Release my throat, or you will commit murder!

Aram. Houseman, it may be I am wrong; but there lives no man on earth save you, who thus could stir my blood!—'Tis not your threats I fear; but I cannot brook that any man should arrogate to himself the thought that he could, by the prospect of whatsoever danger, humble the soul and curb the will of Eugene Aram! You say you would starve should you leave your present associates; that may not be—quit them this night—this moment, and the little in my power, is at your will.

House. As to that, what is in your power is, I fear me, so little, as not to counterbalance the advantages I should lose in quitting my companions:—I expect to net some three hundreds before I leave these parts.

Aram. Some three hundreds!—that were, indeed, beyond me.

House. I do not ask *you* for money, Eugene; these hands can maintain me!—I told you at once the sum I expected to receive *somewhere*; and which I knew was out of your power to give unless, indeed, it were out of the marriage portion you are about to receive with your bride. Fie! Aram,—what! secrets from an old friend?—you see I manage to pick up the news of the village without your confidence!

Aram. I do not know whether I shall receive any marriage portion whatsoever—if I do, I am willing to make some arrangements by which I could engage you to molest me no more. But it yet wants several days of my marriage;—quit the neighbourhood now, and a month hence let's meet again: whatever, at that time, may be my resources, you shall frankly know them.

House. It cannot be;—I quit not these districts without a certain sum, not in hope, but possession. But why so anxious that I should not breathe the same air as yourself?

Aram. It matters not; but when you are near me I feel as if I were with the dead!—it is a spectre that I would exorcise, in ridding me of your presence.

House. Eugene Aram, I have been treated as a tool, and I will not be governed as a friend!—I will not stir from the vicinity of your home till my designs be fulfilled. Could you obtain your bride's dowry, (no doubt a respectable sum) an arrangement might be made. [whistle heard without.] That signal—it is from my comrades,—I must away;—[another whistle.] hark! again!—farewell!

Aram. Farewell! if we must part; still, to-morrow, should you know of any means by which I could feel secure beyond the security of your own word, I might yet—

House. No, the night after to-morrow—the sabbath night, most virtuous Aram! I can meet you then, but not here—some miles hence. You know the foot of the devil's crag, by the water-fall,—it is a spot quiet and shaded enough, in all conscience, for our interview; there I will tell you a secret I would trust to no other man;—hark! again. [another whistle.] Meet me there, for just at present I would rather not trust myself beneath any honest man's roof in this neighbourhood. Adieu!—on Sunday night!—I come! [answers signal and exits, L. U. E.

Aram. The sabbath night! and I must spin forth my existence in trouble and fear till then—till then, and what remedy can I then invent? Courage! courage! my heart, and work thou my busy brain, for ye have never failed me yet.

[Exit, L.]

SCENE IV.—*Exterior of Lester Hall;—morning.*

“A moderately sized and old fashioned mansion—the manor house of the parish; it stood at the very foot of the hill, behind a rich, ancient and hanging wood.”—NOVEL.

Enter CORPORAL BUNTING, R.

Bunt. Hum! ha, coming up that hill—bad as scaling the rock of Gibraltar—makes me puff as if I was asthmatic—baugh!—sound as a roach—wonder what the young squire wants with me?—what I was to get myself in marching trim for—always obey orders;—hey! here he comes, up early like me. Now, Master Walter.

Enter WALTER from house.

Wal. Well met, Corporal,—to your time to a moment.

Bunt. Yes, squire, military time;—lovers and soldiers never behind hand, as your honour and Miss Ellinor knows.

Wal. I and Miss Ellinor!—you forget yourself strangely, Bunting!

Bunt. Beg pardon, sir—beg pardon ; rough soldier—words slipped out of my mouth—absent without leave.

Wal. But why couple me with Miss Ellinor ?—did you imagine that we—we were in love with each other ?

Bunt. Don't know that I did, sir—neighbours do though,—baugh ! must say something.

Wal. The neighbours are very silly, methinks, and very wrong into the bargain.

Bunt. Beg pardon again, sir ;—always getting askew ; believe some said it was with Miss Madeline, but I says, says I, no—I'm a man of the world !—see through a mill-stone ! Miss Madeline's too easy like—Miss Nelly blushes when she speaks,—scarlet is love's regimentals ;—it was ours in the forty-second, edged with *yellow* !—pepper and salt pantaloons ; for my part, I think—but I've no business to think—baugh !

Wal. And what do you think, Mr. Bunting ?—you hesitate.

Bunt. Don't want to offend, but Master Aram's put your honour's nose out of joint—Baugh !—learned man—don't like him—can't see to the bottom of him—don't think he's quite so meek and lamb-like as he looks—puts me in mind of calm dead pool that I saw in foreign parts once ;—wanted to bathe—pored down into it, before went in,—by little and little, eye got used to it—saw something dark at bottom—stared and stared—damned big alligator ! nearly snapped my leg off—walked off immediately,—never liked quiet pools since—baugh !—now what are your honour's commands ?

Wal. Why, as I am now about to leave Grassdale for the great world—

Bunt. Augh ! baugh ! what, the great world !—how ? when ?—going away !—who goes with your honour ?

Wal. Faith, Bunting, my honour's self ! I have no companion unless you like to attend me.

Bunt. Eh ! I !—your honour's too good—might do worse though,—seen the world—know what's what—understand humbug, and all that ; so if your honour really is going, and wants a companion to brush your coat, polish your shoes, and give you good advice, why here's with you.

Wal. Be it so, Bunting ; we will set off immediately.

Bunt. Your honour will, of course, make an allowance for expenses on the road, and keeping up establishment here, more a matter of form than any thing else—never valued lucre—baugh !

Wal. You shall have no reason to complain.

Bunt. Then I'll go and farm out the cat—garrison the cocks and hens—billet the pig—buckle on knapsack—shut up the house, and be back again in the flashing of a pan!—right about face! quick! march!—baugh!

[*Exit, R.*

Wal. He is timely off!—I see my Madeline approaching;—*my* Madeline!—no, no! She comes! what pleasure and what pain are in her presence!

Enter MADELINE from house.

Madeline, dear Madeline, your hand. Nay, do not fear me; I would but give you the parting blessing of one who, wherever he goes or whatever befall him, will always think of you as the brightest and loveliest of human beings! May you be happy! yes, even with another!

Mad. Oh! Walter! if I ever encouraged—if I ever led you to hope for more than the warm, the sisterly affection I bear you, how bitterly should I reproach myself!

Wal. You never did, dear Madeline; but as I am about to quit you, and you confess you feel for me the affection of a sister, may I speak as a brother?

Mad. Freely, Walter!

Wal. Then it is not all too late for me to say one word of caution as relates to—Eugene Aram!

Mad. Of caution!—you alarm me! Does aught threaten him?—speak! I implore you! quick!

Wal. I know of no danger to him; but may there be no danger to *you*?

Mad. Walter!

Wal. Madeline, for your own sake, for my sake, your sister's sake, and your good father's, decide not too hastily—love him if you will, but observe him.

Mad. Cousin, it is Madeline Lester you ask to act the watch, to play the spy upon the man whom she exults in loving! for shame, for shame! to think that I, to whom he has given his noble heart, will receive it only to be the eaves-dropper to its secrets!—away, away!

Wal. Is this the return, then, for the warning of too disinterested, too self-forgetful a love?

Mad. Love! cousin?—grant me patience!—it was but now I thought myself honoured by the affection you said you bore me! at this instant, I blush to have called forth a single sentiment in one who knows so little what love is. I thought it denoted all that was high and noble in our nature;—you would make it the type and con-

centration of all that lowers and debases!—out on you,—love?

Wal. Enough, enough!—say no more, Madeline, say no more!—we part not as I had hoped; but be it so, you are changed indeed, if your conscience smite you not hereafter for your injustice!

Enter LESTER and ELLINOR from house.

Les. Now, nephew; hey! all ready?—we are all ready—the horses are in the court yard, and here's your letters of introduction;—don't forget John Courtland, a seductive dog to drink with; be sure and let me know how honest John looks, and what he says of me!—here's Ellinor here too—she has brought you the purse she promised to knit for you; and, by-the-bye, don't let me forget to give you some money to put in it.

Ell. Yes, dear Waiter, it must be my parting gift;—ah! if you had the value of the good wishes that accompany it, what riches would be yours?

Wal. Thanks, thanks, dear Ellinor!—farewell! and till I return take care of yourself for the sake of one, who loves you now better than any thing on earth! Thank heaven I am cured at last!

[aside.]

Enter BUNTING, R.—prepared for journey.

Bunt. Now then, your honour, all ready—farmed the cat on Master Dealtry—littered the pigs on Dame Webster—barricadoed the house—armed and provisioned myself—gave all the girls in the village parting kiss—wanted terribly to prevent my going,—not to be done, though I love 'em all, as I do gunpowder;—man of the world—never neglect my duty!—Women's tears, to be sure, strangely moving!—like pearls;—but to think they'd move Jacob Bunting?—baugh!

Les. Eh! the Corporal going to accompany you, Walter? Odds heart! but I'm glad of that; he'll be a guard if he's nothing else, and there's the Roman nosed horse for him.

Bunt. Cavalry service!—Mounted, eh! with all my heart, horse or foot, all the same to Jacob Bunting; no service come amiss to me—seen the world—know what's what, but won't brag;—what's brag? humbug—baugh!

Les. I shall rely greatly on your discretion, Bunting, to assist my nephew in his exigencies.

Bunt. Be easy, squire,—know what discretion is—got plenty of it;—discretion's a jewel—it's better than a jewe. —it's a pair of stirrups!

Les. A what, Bunting?

Bunt. Pair of stirrups, your honour;—stirrups help you to get on, so does discretion;—to get off, ditto discretion. Men without stirrups look fine—ride bold—tire soon;—men without discretion cut dash—knock up in a crack; stirrups—but what signifies?—could say much, but shan't—hate chatter—all humbug—baugh!

Wal. Your simile is ingenious enough, if not very poetical, Corporal; but it doesn't hold good to the last; when a man falls his discretion should preserve him, but he is often dragged in the mud by his stirrups!—But we must start! Madeline—we have both been hasty; let us not part unkindly.

Mad. Unkindly!—no, if I have been wrong, any penance—

Wal. Follow my admonitions.

Mad. Ah, any thing else, but no more of this. Is all forgiven?

Wal. All! farewell!—I must tear myself away!—uncle, Ellinor, bless you!

Les. We will accompany you as far as the village, boy.

Ell. Oh, yes, yes; I cannot say good-bye,—Madeline, sister! aid me!

Wal. Now, Corporal; now then, onwards; for the first time do I leave my childhood's home! I will discover my father's fate, or never more return!—on, on!

[*Exeunt omnes, R.*

SCENE V.—*Old fashioned Apartment in Lester Hall; a large window at the back, looking into the garden; bureau on one side.*

" When Lester returned, Madeline, with a triumphant air, informed him that Aram had consented to be their guest for the night!"

NOVEL.

Enter DEALTRY, THOMAS, SERVANTS, and VILLAGERS.

Tho. Hey! bless me, Master Dealtry, why what is the matter?

Deal. Fire! thieves! and sudden death is the matter, Thomas. Where is the squire?—where are the young ladies? What a pity the Corporal and Mr. Walter have gone away!—There's rumours and tidings, Thomas!—murder and robbery, Thomas!—two houses have been broken open at Checkington!—Squire Tibson has been totally rifled, and his bureau tied up to the bedposts!—

Sally the maid was flustered and shut up in the thingumery!—there's a whole gang of 'em, blunderbusses and all! and no doubt they're coming here; so we must be prepared, Thomas; for my part I am prepared; yes, as worthy Doctor Drivel says—

These wicked men shall drink the dregs,
Which they in wrath shall wring,
For I will lift my voice, and make
Them flee while I do sing!

Tho. I have not the smallest doubt of it, Master Dealtry; but here comes the squire.

Enter LESTER, MADELINE, and ELLINOR, R.

Les. Hey-day! what's this I hear?—thieves in Grassdale!—egad! then we must look about ourselves—look out all our old blunderbusses!—cock all our odd pistols! aye, aye! we'll soon teach the rogues to come here! It's almost a pity I let Walter and the Corporal go!

Deal. It is, indeed, sir; the Corporal would have been a tower of strength! but I must endeavour to supply his place;—

Yea I will lift mine arm on high
And smite the knaves full sore!

Mad. We have Eugene left, sir; and where he is who can fear harm?

Ell. Still I wish Walter had remained behind, for all that, sister.

Les. You seem to have been patrolling betimes, landlord; but your men will be tired out before you bring them into action.

Deal. Nothing like being prepared, squire; I've armed them with all the bludgeons and pitchforks I could collect together, for we're not very nUGHTy at the musket service—we must do that extemporaneously like—

Out of the engine's mortal throats
We'll pour the fire and smoke!

Les. Ah! smoke, indeed!—I shouldn't wonder if it wasn't to turn out all smoke! but here Eugene comes.

Enter EUGENE, L.

Mad. Dear, dear, Eugene!

Ell. And Walter so far away, heigho!

[aside.]

Les. Well, you have heard the news?

Aram. I have, sir; but place little credence in it.

Les. Well, well, we'll be prepared for the knaves, at all events; take your men down to your house, landlord; let them all have a convenient quantity of ale at

my expense, to prime their courage; and then let them keep watch in different parts of the village all night.

Deal. Your honour shall be obeyed; they are brave men, and I have sworn them all in special by virtue of my office of constable, therefore we've nothing to fear. For though, as Doctor Drivel says, "the wicked do flourish like a bay-tree for a season, and worry us poor lambs, yet are they cut down and withered like grass at last;" therefore hold up your heads, silence, order, discipline, and march!

[*Exit Dealtry with Villagers, r. marching awkwardly.*

Les. Ha! ha! ha! an awkward squad, truly; notwithstanding all their boasting, it's my firm belief the bare sight of one thorough-bred London foot-pad would put them all to flight like so many sparrows!—But come, girls, don't look so pale upon it, Eugene will stay here to-night.

Mad. Will he? then I can have no fear.

Les. He can have Walter's room.

Aram. Nay, nay, this couch.

Les. Well, well, that as you like. Come, Thomas, shut the windows and bring a lamp for the night!

Ell. The evening sets in darkly! I shouldn't think that even robbers would venture out in such a night as this promises to be.

Mad. Nay, I have heard that it is generally such dark and gloomy nights that are picked out for deeds of guilt.

Aram. Not always:—murder has often made the innocent moon turn pale, and robbery brought dark clouds over the brightest nights!

Les. Pooh, pooh! we shall not be disturbed here, I warrant me!—The girls are hipped, Eugene; they have been parting with Walter,—parting brings sorrow—sorrow occasions heaviness—rest is the best specific. To your couches, loves—sleep without fear; Aram and I will be upon the watch. Come, I will see you to your room.

Mad. Good-night, dear Aram!

Aram. Blessings on thee, Madeline!

Mad. Be cautious, for my sake.

Aram. I will—I will!

Ell. Good-night!—oh, dear! oh, dear! if our dear Walter had but stayed, how very much better I should have slept to-night, surely;—heigho! come, sister!

[*Exeunt Lester, Madeline, and Ellinor, r.*

Aram. Trusting, beautiful creature!—ah! did she dream at this moment that I am girded with peril from which I see no ultimate escape! No, delay it as I will, it seems as if the blow must come at last; though fourteen years have passed, and but one witness of that most terrible night—still, still destruction hovers o'er me, and but one thread withholds it! Wheresoe'er I turn I see despair! and she, she clings to me, and in my presence thinks the whole earth is filled with joy and hope! Well, I will make one effort more! Should Houseman chance attempt this hall, and the villain hinted darkly, one shot might free me, and without a crime, for ever!—But no, no!—out on the tempting thought!—out on it!—and yet it is a tempting, a wondrously tempting one!—it beamed across me like a flash of lightning, when this hand was at his throat!—a tighter strain—another moment, and Eugene Aram had not had an enemy, a witness 'gainst him, left throughout the world! Ha! are the dead no foes then?—are the dead no witnesses? [noise without.] What's that? By heavens! a file!—they're here—they're wrenching off the bars!—yes! 'mid the silence of the night I hear them! Should Houseman be amongst them!—out lamp, lest I should put them on their guard! [puts out the lamp; stage quite dark; Blacklock and Allbone are heard breaking in.] Where are my arms—my pistols?—back, back, back! [retires.]

ALLBONE and BLACKLOCK, having wrenched open the shutters, enter through window, with dark lanthorn and bludgeons.

Black. I knew they had all retired. You overheard the old squire talk of having five hundred guineas in the bureau?—we'll nibble that, and then be off at once—no occasion to search further.

Aram. [aside.] Surely that form is Houseman's!—ah! if it is, my secret's safe for ever!

All. Now for it!

Aram. Villain!

All. The light there, Bill—I'm wounded!—let's face our men! [they turn the dark lanthorn.] [fires.]

Aram. Damnation! strangers!—have I shed blood for nothing, then?

Black. There is but one!—down with him!

Aram. Nay, have at you!

[Terrific struggle between Aram, Blacklock, and Allbone; interrupted by noise without.]

All. An alarm!—a surprise!—let us be off; besides, I'm growing faint!

[they effect their escape through the window.

Aram. More blood!—more blood!—still blood, blood, blood!

Enter LESTER, MADELINE, ELLINOR, and SERVANTS, confusedly with lights.

Les. Good heavens! what is the matter?—I heard a shot!

Mad. Eugene! dear Eugene!

Aram. [wildly.] They have been here! but HE was not among them!—I have encountered them!—they've fled! behold! [pointing to window.]

Les. Ha! pursue them!—search the gardens—the villain may have perished with your bullet.

Aram. Ha! say you so!—think you that I have killed him? No, no, it cannot be!—the ball did not strike home!—I saw him stagger! but he did not fall!—he rallied—he attacked me! Not so the wretched who has a mortal wound—I saw one once—

Mad. Eugene, Eugene! there's blood upon thy hand!

Aram. I know it—there is blood!—blood that all the ocean cannot cleanse!—but you cannot denounce me?

Mad. Eugene!

Aram. There's blood, you say!—tis true, but 'tis not the first blow that kills—no, you must strike again,—what is a little blood?

Mad. Eugene!

Aram. Bring water! water here, I say!—what, will you let the damning stagnant gore ooze, and rot in the boards, startling the eye, and scaring the seared heart with its foul, filthy, and unutterable stains? No, no! water, I say! aye, water! water! water!

Mad. He raves!—Eugene! Eugene! Eugene!

[sinks at his feet]

Les. See! she has fallen senseless at your feet!

Aram. Madeline! fearful moment! [raises her.] Cold, cold, cold! but not death's coldness!—no, she'll live again!—water! water! water!

[they group around Aram and Madeline;—tableau.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Interior of Courtland's House;—a large light airy apartment with several windows at the back.*

"I, sir, never can have enough air: thorough draught or east wind, it is all the same to me, so that I do but breathe. Is that like hy-pochondria?—psha!"—NOVEL.

Enter JOHN, WALTER, and BUNTING, L.

Wal. Deliver this letter to your master, Mr. Courtland, and tell him that I wish particularly to see him.

John. I will, sir; but I'm sure I don't know whether he'll be able to get through the fatigue of an interview, poor gentleman; he's so weak and in such bad spirits.

Wal. Weak! hum!—what's the matter with him, friend?

John. Why, sir, it's a complication of disorders like, but nothing particular, only that he's always very poorly; he eats, drinks, and sleeps to be sure, but he's not able to do any thing else.

Bunt. Hum! what would he do else?—ill! all humbug—baugh!

Wal. Silence, Bunting!—How long has he been in this bad way?

John. Oh, a very long time, sir; let me see, it's been going on, aye, twelve—fourteen years.

Wal. Ah, then it will last a little longer yet. Well, deliver my letter and message, friend.

John. I will, sir.

[Exit, R.

Wal. Soh, then, at last I have obtained a clue:—strange that, losing my riding whip, the first place I stop at to replace it I should see one bearing the crest and initials of my father—that, on enquiry, I should find it belonged to a gentleman who had passed a day with my uncle's friend, Squire Courtland, here! that this very whip was left to be mended fourteen years back, shortly after my father's disappearance, and has never since been inquired after.. What do you think of it, Bunting?

Bunt. Wild goose chase!—all a bottle of smoke, your honour—better be using the whip to get us on our way to London, than waste time asking questions after it here;—old soldier, sir—mere will o' the wisp; but as for any thing substantial—baugh!

Wal. I do not think so: I have a strange presentiment upon my mind—it will not leave me, nor will I cease to follow it until all trace be gone! My father, my wandering, imprudent father I t and out thy fate!—How

fare they all at Grassdale in our absence?—my uncle, Ellinor—that strange mysterious Aram too, and Madeline!—Sweet, sweet Ellinor!—as Madeline's image fades upon my heart, does her's acquire new force!

Bunt. And quite proper it should, your honour,—should always recruit, to fill up the ranks, whether in the heart or the army. Hope Dealtry won't oblige my cat to steal by not feeding her—she *is* a cat, all others are mere quadrupeds, but as to being cats—baugh!

Wal. Hist! I see the old gentleman coming; looks pretty stout for an invalid. Leave us, Bunting—I am all impatience—all anxiety.

Bunt. I'm off, sir, into the pantry—seen the world—always do what's proper—must see what there is to eat—never intrude, and as for curiosity—Jacob Bunting curious—baugh!

[*Exit, L.*

Enter COURTLAND and JOHN, R.

Court. Ah, my dear young friend—welcome, welcome!—how is your worthy uncle?—why is he not with you?—you dine with me of course?—Sunday, a late dinner. John, tell the cook to add a tongue and some chickens to the roast beef and other trifles. [*Exit John.*] We keep a shocking poor house, sir—I eat nothing—falling away daily;—don't you find it dreadfully close?—not a breath of air stirring—foh! I'm ready to suffocate, and I see you can scarcely gasp. I shall certainly die for want of air one of these days. Shall I set all the doors and windows open?

Wal. By no means!—I was thinking your situation amazingly airy.

Court. Deceiving, sir—deceiving;—I'm dying by inches—constitution quite gone!

Wal. One would not think so, sir, to look at you; you still seem to be the same picture of health my uncle described you to be some years ago.

Court. All fictitious, sir; the colour in my cheeks, merely stagnant blood!—I'm no hypochondriac, sir, as my fool of a doctor wants to persuade me;—I'm not nervous—I don't mind air, sir—can't have air enough. But your uncle, he is quite stout, I hope; does he breathe freely?—no oppression?

Wal. None, sir, none. I should not have intruded on you, but I have unexpectedly lighted on an article that once belonged to my father, and I find, from the saddler

to whom I bought it, that the owner was at your house some twelve or fourteen years since.—I know not if you are aware that our family have heard nothing respecting his fate for years previous to the period of which I speak ! Can you give me any information ?

Court. Eh ! your father !—what poor Geoffrey Lester ? not heard of him !—his family not know where he is ? that's bad, very bad ! but Lord he was always a wild fellow—here, there, and every where, like a flash of lightning ! He was here, sure enough—told me he was preparing a surprise for his family—that if I met any of them I was not to mention having seen him ; that he had been to India, where he had passed under the name of Clarke.

Wal. Clarke ! proceed, sir, I conjure you !

Court. Aye, Daniel Clarke !—he had made free with the name of a friend, as he had left England on the sly.

Wal. Strange, inconsistent being ! Well, sir, and then—

Court. I declare I'm afraid I've scarcely breath to tell you ; but, however, as you seem interested—

Wal. I am indeed, sir—deeply, most deeply ; pardon my impatience.

Court. He told me that in India he had saved the life of an old colonel in a tiger hunt, who had shortly after returned to England and settled in Yorkshire,—that he had followed him, but found the colonel had died shortly before his arrival—you see what poor weak mortals we are —leaving him a handsome legacy under his assumed name of Clarke, and that he was then going to Yorkshire to receive it. Didn't you ever hear of it ?

Wal. Never !

Court. Nor of him ?

Wal. No syllable !

Court. Hum !—he must have died suddenly, then.

Wal. You know the place in Yorkshire surely ?

Court. I think he said Knaresborough.

Wal. And the colonel's name ?

Court. That I do not remember.

Wal. Unlucky chance ! but you have told me more, sir, than we have heard since his departure.—My horses' heads shall instantly turn northwards ; yes, I'll not lose an instant !—Bunting !

Court. Well, but you'll stop dinner ?—I've not much, being an invalid, & having no appetite : there's merely [calling.]

a little strong soup, scarce half a tureen full! some three pounds of stewed carp; the tender part of a sirloin of beef; the tongue and chickens I spoke of; a few tartlets, and, and—but, however, we'll make it all up with the port and deviled biscuits.

Wal. I thank you, sir, but—

Court. Nay, nay, I can't take any denial; you may never see me again, you know! What a thing it is to be dying imperceptibly in the manner I am!

Wal. Well, sir, for a brief hour, to rest the horses, I will accept your hospitality, and then for Yorkshire and my father! Bunting!

Enter BUNTING, L.

Bunt. Your honour!

Wal. Prepare our horses instantly—we must set off for Yorkshire immediately!

Bunt. Hey! what's in the wind now?—leave London for Yorkshire!—baugh!

Wal. I shall but tarry to take a mouthful, and then will join you. Now, sir.

Court. Ah, dinner must be ready by this time—gently, gently, foh! I want air—I'm choaking!

Bunt. With fat—baugh!

Court. Fat, good fellow!—no, no, all delusion—puffed up—wind—wind! I want air, sir—air, air!

[*Exeunt Walter and Courtland, R.*

Bunt. All humbug!—baugh!—what's in the wind now?—Yorkshire!—has he found his father's spurs as well as his whip, that he's in such a hurry? Lucky I took in rations;—man of the world!—pocketed what I couldn't eat—delicacy—baugh!—all humbug!—old soldier! come over the cook first thing,—no love like cupboard love—that will last! all the rest flash in the pan—turtles, doves, ducks, and dears—baugh!—beef and mutton a great deal better! Love—baugh!—psha! waugh! all humbug!

[*Exit, R.*

SCENE II.—*The Devil's Crag and Parricide's Gibbet;*—
wild romantic scene; waterfall at the back; stage dark.

"The Devil's Crag, as it was popularly called, was a spot consecrated by many a wild tradition, which would not perhaps be wholly out of character with the dark thread of this tale."—NOVEL.

Enter ARAM, R.

Aram. At length, then, this eventful night, fraught with my final fate, has come! The sabbath night!—to

what a purpose is its sacred hours devoted?—midnight has struck!—where is my companion? Ah! once before I waited for him, and on as dread an errand!—no more of that! Footsteps!—who comes?—Houseman!

House. [without, L.—] Aram!

Aram. Aye, well met!

Enter HOUSEMAN, L.

House. Is this our place of conference?—'Twere better could we gain the cave below, 'tis not St. Robert's Cave!

Aram. The cave! Fiend! St. Robert's Cave!—wouldst thou have me raving?—mention it not!—no, no, would it were buried twenty thousand fathom deep in ocean!

House. Well, well, 'tis dark, i'faith; we scarce can see each other's faces.—You mean fair, Aram? if not, I've a knife here, one that has done good service, and let me but suspect that you play false, that instant will I plunge it in your heart!

Aram. Fool! I should dread you dead still more than living! You're safe!

House. Give me your hand in pledge of faith.

Aram. There! *[extends his left hand.]*

House. This is your left hand!—give me your right.

Aram. As you will; but for fourteen years I have not given this right hand in pledge of fellowship to living man!—you alone deserve the courtesy. There! now then to business.

House. Aye, now to business; this is but a wild spot, this devil's crag, and I love not darkness! no, not even with a fairer sort of companion than the one I have now the honour of being in company with.

Aram. Hear me, Houseman! I would be safe and free!—there are two ways alone to make me so:—the first is through your death!

House. Ha!

Aram. Nay, start not! you've now no cause to fear me!—if I had chosen that mode of escape, I could have practised it two nights since, when my blood was up and the fury was upon me!

House. I'd have had a struggle for it, though.

Aram. Now for the second means to gain security. You must quit this country, aye, for ever!—your home must be cast—your very grave be dug within a foreign soil! Are you prepared for this?—if not, I say no more, bu passive trust to fate!

House. Hum ! desert my country, and for ever —
Shew me the advantages I am to gain by exile, and farewell to the pale cliffs of old England for ever !

Aram. Your demand is just ;—listen : I am willing to employ all my poor wealth, save a bare pittance to support existence, to purchase an annuity for you !

House. An annuity !

Aram. Aye, to commence the moment that you reach a foreign clime, but to cease, for ever, the instant you again touch English ground ; and, mark me, when I die—

House. With all my heart !—but what's to be the amount of this same annuity ?

Aram. What do you wish it ?

House. Oh, as I like to settle business amicably and pleasantly, I'll tell you at once the exact sum on which, if I could receive it yearly, I could live without looking beyond the pale of the law for more—cheerfully renounce old England, and set up honest man again. But, hark'ye, I must have half of it settled on my little daughter.

Aram. What ! have you a child ?

House. Aye, a little girl, my only one, just eight years old, my pretty Jane !—she now lives with her grandmother, for I am wifeless,—she must not be left portionless ! Should I be summoned hence before my time !—some twelve years hence, poor Jane may chance get married, for she's good-looking, and then—

Aram. Agreed ! Now name the sum you deem sufficient.

House. Hum ! twenty—fifty—wine and the creature cheap abroad ; a hundred for living, and half as much for pleasure. Well, Aram—come, a hundred-and-fifty guineas a year, and I'm content ;—you see I'm not exorbitant.

Aram. Be it so : to-morrow I will set off for London and get the settlement prepared ; but you must now agree to leave this neighbourhood, aye, and your comrades.

House. I'll oblige you even in that ;—my comrades are off already, and I shall follow them at day-break. Let us meet in London after the business is completed, and then conclude our last interview on earth !

Aram. What will be your address ?

House. There is in Lambeth a narrow alley, that leads to the water side, called Peveril Lane,—the last house to the right towards the river is my lodging ; it is a safe resting-place, at all times, and for 11 men.

Aram. There, then, will I seek you ; and now, Houseman, let us part ; as you remember your word to me, may life flow smooth for you and your child !

House. Eugene Aram ! there is something about you, against which the fiercer devil within me would rise in vain ! I have heard that the tiger can be awed into submission by the human eye—I now believe it ;—tis strange how we came thus connected, or how—but we must not rip up the past—’twould be an ugly sight !—besides these sort of stories don’t do for the dark. Hey, Jesu ! how it rains !—lightning too !—I could look with less fear on a naked sword than those red blinding forked flashes !—Hark ! hark ! there is thunder !

Aram. A fit night for such a conference. Well, my road is this way. [crosses, R.]

House. And mine that. [crosses, L.]

Aram. To-morrow we meet again !

House. Ha ! by the fiend ! but I would not cross the Moor that you’ve got to cross, in such a night as this, alone, for a full hundred ;—there’s a gibbet somewhere hereabout, on which a parricide was hung in chains. [thunder.] Pray heaven this storm prove no omen of our present compact !

Aram. A steady heart is its own omen, Houseman ; farewell !

House. Farewell !

[Exit, L.]

Aram. He goes ! Now let the storm howl on—the storm within hath at least a respite ; at length I have silenced this inveterate spy !—yes, heaven be praised he, too, has human ties ; I hold him ! Courage, Eugene Aram ! the mind for which thou hast lived, for which thou hast hazarded thy soul, can yet support thee !—aye, through every peril !—want cannot now come to me as of old. Had the fell devil that’s at Houseman’s heart been difficult in laying, so vital is his absence to me, I would have purchased it at any cost ! aye, though my pistol—[thunder.] That thunderbolt ! how angrily it speaks in reprobation—’tis right, I’ve had enough of blood !—yes, ’twas a fearful deed !—in the lone night, our victim unsuspecting—yet fourteen years—how the wind rises !—vengeance has slumbered long—it may be stayed ;—what’s that ? a rustling of chains !—am I betrayed ? [*Aram turns hastily round—a broad flash discovers part of a skeleton suspended from a gibbet in chains ; chains clank in the wind—the skeleton moves.*] Merciful

powers! what do I see? a gibbet! and a skeleton in gyves!—'tis, 'tis!—see, see! and grinning at me as in mockery!—it points its bony finger at me!—invites me to companionship!—Can this be prescient of my fate?—can this be warning of my doom? it must—it is!—My eye-balls sear—sight fails!—all, all grows red around me!—blood red—the trees are changing into fiends—the clouds to snakes, that sting my heart!—the raging elements all wail of murder!—the thunder speaks of vengeance!—the lightnings paint hell's fires!—I hear a voice no other one can hear!—'tis Clarke's—the murdered Clarke's!—hark! hark! it cries “come, murderer, come, and render blood for blood!” Oh, horror! horror!

[rushes off, R.

SCENE III.—*Exterior of Eugene Aram's House.*

“ The house had belonged to a family of some note, whose heirs had outstripped their fortunes: the solitude of the place had been the main attraction to Aram!”—NOVEL.

Enter MADELINE and ELLINOR from house.

Mad. Yes, all goes on rightly; you know I promised our dear Eugene, sister, that during his short, but unavoidable absence in London, that I would occasionally look in at his house here, and see that nought was wanted.

Ell. Practice makes perfect, Madeline; there is nothing like accustoming yourself to play the mistress betimes.

Mad. Fie, fie! Ellinor!—But where can our dear father stay?—he had but to go down to the post office;—suppose there should be a letter from Walter, eh, sister?

Ell. Or one from Eugene, Madeline; but your impatience has scarcely given our dear father time to reach the post office, much less return. Oh you lovers! heigho!

Mad. Poor sister Ellinor!

Ell. You seem quite in spirits to-day, Madeline; and yet you did not think it possible, and he not here—

Mad. I have been occupied discovering how much I love him.

Ell. Enthusiast!—his love has made thee musing as himself. But hey! who have we here?—oh, our worthy publican and psalm singer, Mr. Dealtry; he looks important.

Enter DEALTRY, L.

Deal. The squire not here! then have I missed the time; and yet I thought it was the common time, too. I am out in my measure by two feet, still I will not lose my labour; as the young ladies are here I will converse with them; but as it's on the delicate subject of matrimony, and they are virgins, I must speak in parables. Your servant, ladies,—bless me! I was going to call them dearly beloved!

Ell. Your servant, Mr. Dealtry. Any news of your friend, the Corporal, yet?

Deal. Oh no, none; but he has not the pen of a ready writer like some. I do almost begin to wish that he and his master were come, or that they had never gone.

Ell. And I'm sure so do I.

Deal. For though he was rather profane himself, still he would not let others be so. They are a most ungracious set here;—my clerkship gets me little reverence, as Doctor Drivel says—

Still when I does discourse of things
Most holy to their tribe;
What does they do?—they mocks at me,
And makes my harp a gibe!

Mad. I am sorry to hear that, Mr. Dealtry. Were you looking for my father?

Deal. Yes, Miss; but you, perhaps, may do as well. Will you be good enough to say the banns he spoke of have been published, and the parties may be now inconveniently joined in holy wedlock. He will know who I mean,—no need to mention names.

Ell. Oh, certainly not, Mr. Dealtry. “I publish the banns of matrimony between Madeline Lester, Spinster, and Eu——”

Mad. Fie, madcap!

Ell. Well, well, I've done. “If any one knows any just cause or impediment why these two parties——”

Mad. Sister, sister!

Ell. I beg your pardon! Mr. Dealtry, you were about to say something else.

Deal. Only that every thing is ready against the appointed day;—nosegays, bells, and all,—together with a hymn of my own, by way of epithalamium, made for the occasion, and which I am just now going to exercise the charity children in.

Ell. Very charitable of you, I'm sure, Mr. Dealtry;—ent it, sister?

Deal. 'Tis a sweet worded thing!

Ell. Perhaps you could favour us with a stanza of it, Mr. Dealtry, by way of grace before meat as it were, and to give us a relish for the rest?

Mad. Nay, now, Ellinor! indeed there is no necessity, Mr. Dealtry; couldn't think of troubling you on my account.

Deal. It is a pleasure;—one verse and I will go:—

And when in wedlock they do cling,
May store of children young and able,
Like unto olive branches spring
And flourish all about their table.

[*Exit, L.*

ELLINOR, (mocking.)

" Like unto olive branches spring
And flourish underneath the table."

Ha! ha! ha!

Mad. Wicked puss! But I'll revenge myself anon tenfold!—Ah! our dear father! Well, dear sir, were you successful?

Enter LESTER, L.

Are there any letters?

Ell. Ah, are there any letters, pa?

Les. Patience, patience, madcaps!—there, Madeline, is one for you.

Mad. My Aram's hand!—oh, joy, joy!

Les. And here, Ellinor, is—

Ell. One for me, pa?

Les. No, for me, girl! Walter writes me word that he has had a rencontre with some robbers.

Ell. Good heavens!

Les. But has recovered; so don't be alarmed. He further tells me that he now is on his journey northwards—having obtained at last some clue to his poor father's fate!

Ell. Enthusiastic boy!—ah, if he should—

Mad. Who knows but my lost uncle may yet be present at my wedding?

Les. Ah! Madeline, girl! Well, you have read your letter,—come now, what news?—what says he?—we must have no secrets.

Mad. Oh, no! It is from London, sir;—he has ar-

rived, and safely.—He is about returning ; yes, yes, re-turning, Ellinor—think, think of that, dear girl ! He may arrive to-morrow ! He writes in spirits, and I, I am happy !

Ell. Heigho ! and Walter, sir—does he say nothing more ?—does he not mention—

Les. Yes, here's a postscript ;—you shall have his own words : “ Tell, Ellinor, the bitterest misfortune I have yet experienced, is in having been robbed of her purse! —will she knit me another ?”

Mad. Aye, will you, Nell ?

Les. My life on't ; ah, they are sad tell-tales those same blushes, they come in scarlet like the postman, and carry all the secrets of the heart about them. But come, let's home ;—come, Madeline—come, Nell ! [*Exeunt*, R.]

SCENE IV.—*Apartment in Houseman's Lodgings, Peveril Lane, Lambeth.*

“ Reeking with the stamp and odour of the most repellive character of vice ! ”—NOVEL.

Enter HOUSEMAN, cautiously, L.

House. Soh ! safe at London in my own snug crib at last ;—I've had the office from the Cove of the Ken, and there's been no nose on the tout since I've been gone ; that's plummy ! We've not made such a bad journey of it from Grassdale, me and my pals ;—picked up a customer as we came along—one of Aram's friends, I think, for I've seen the youngster in his village ; that saved his throat, by the bye, for he was obstropolous, and Allbone would have chived him—I'd much ado to save him ; but I have had enough of blood.—His man didn't give us much trouble—frightened himself with the report of his own pistol, and was off like a shot. It's the last ramp and ruffle I shall be engaged in ; that is, if Aram keeps his word. Surely he will not fail to come. [*knock without.*] Ha ! a knock !—who's there ?—Joe the Cracksman ?

Aram. [without.] I seek one Houseman !

House. Eh ! Aram !—good, good ! Now for my little Jane and France ! [*opens door.*] Welcome !—come in—come in—this way,—mind the corner—the stairs are rather cranky.

Enter ARAM, L.

Well, and how goes it ?

Aram. I have come to discharge my part of our agreement. There ; you will perceive by this document that

the sum mentioned is secured to you the moment you quit this country ;—you have but to sign the counterpart.

House. Oh, I'll do that directly ; though that's sooner said than done, for we're rather queerly off for tools here.—Stay, I've got some I borrowed from genteel Jack the fogle-hunter, that lives down in the cellar ;—he's a bit of a scholar ; though it isn't all of us are such scholars as you are, Master Aram. [sits down to sign.

Aram. And what is my gain ? Ah ! when a thoughtful boy, and first enamoured with study, how beautiful on the mountain tops seemed to me the steps of knowledge.—I lived but to feed my mind ;—wisdom was my thirst—my dream, my aliment ; and have I not sown the whirlwind and reaped the storm ? The glory of my youth is gone—my veins are chilled—my frame is bowed—my heart is gnawed with care ! and, after all, what is my gain ?—great heavens ! what is my gain ?

House. Now then, there it is, all signed. [coming forward.

Aram. Joy, joy !—You can, you will depart ; but when ?—to-night—to-morrow ?—hasten, I entreat you !

House. Make your mind easy ;—before day-break to-morrow I will be on the road.

Aram. Thanks, thanks !

House. There is my hand upon it. You may now rest assured that you are free from me for life !—Go home—marry—enjoy your existence as I have done :—within four days, if the wind sets fair, I am in France.

Aram. I will believe you. My business now is done ! yet I will place myself wholly beyond the power of chance ! I will adopt a new name—seek a new retreat !—Madeline may not know the real cause, but this brain is not barren of excuse. I may defy fear now—dance on, my heart, and welcome love and joy ! Houseman, farewell for ever !—never must we meet more ! Now, now for Madeline, security, and happiness ! [Exit, L.

House. Hum !—he's settled his business and I've settled mine ;—competence and safety for a lodging t'other side the channel. What a bugbear is this conscience ! Fourteen years have rolled away, and nothing is discovered ; nothing known—nothing can be, thanks to St. Robert's Cave ! Again, 'stead of the rope and scaffold, I have gained independence by this deed !—aye, and for life ! My child, my Jane, too—she will not want—she will not be a beggar nor an outcast ! But where's Sal Hammond ?—I must prepare for my departure ;—ha ! by my hopes, she comes !

Enter SAL HAMMOND, R.

Sal. Houseman !

House. Sal, wench, welcome !—welcome, girl !—pack up your duds, we must away,—cut stick at once !—You shall take a trip with me to France, slut ; aye, and show off that handsome face, for you are devilish handsome, 'mongst the Mounseers.

Sal. Eh ! the Mounseers, Dick ?

House. Aye, by this buss, you shall. [*going to kiss her.*] Eh ! what the devil's this you've got in your bosom, you she shark ? a love letter, I'll be sworn on't.

Sal. 'Tis to you then, for it came this morning, and I was just going to give it you.

House. Ha ! a letter to me !—hey ! the Knaresbro-post mark ! My mother-in-law's cramp't hand ;—what can the old crone want with me ? [*reads.*] Father of mercy ! my child is ill—is dying !—the only thing that loves me—that does not hate me as a villain !

Sal. Hey-day ! why, Dick ! let a brat move you thus !

House. Away, hag !—My child, my little Jane, the image of my wife !—she whom I loved—my pretty innocent Jane ! she, she is dying ! Let me away at once. Where is my horse ?—what is money—what is ease, if Jane——no, no, she must not, shall not die !—To Knaresbro' ! aye, to Knaresbro' ! away !

[*Exit hastily, L. followed by Sal.*

SCENE V.—Gipsey Glen, on the road between York and Knaresbro'.—*Gipsies discovered.*

"A scene of this sort is, perhaps, one of the most striking that the green lanes of old England afford."—NOVEL

GLEE.—GIPSIES.

Liberty, liberty ! search the world round,
'Tis with the gipsy alone thou art found.

Then in the gay greenwood we worship thee now,
The free, oh ! the free still live under the bough.

Trarah ! Trarah ! hark, the deep dingles ring,
Free hearts with the bird and the deer are on the wing ;
Joy claims in the greenwood the gipsy's glad vow,
The blithe, oh ! the blithe still live under the bough.

Enter BESS AIRLIE, R.

Bess. Well trolled Romoners ! It promises to be a ben darkmans ;—the lady moon will lend us a silver light to go to our dorse by !—Ab, she's a dimber lady, the lady

moon. Eh! who have we here? strangers!—lie close, they must be plied; we may get the balsam, my Oli Compolis;—couch, couch, and listen, that we may tell them all we learn;—the youngest seems no Lans Prisado.

[*Bess and Gipsies retire to back.*

Enter WALTER and BUNTING, .

Wal. You shall have your will, Bunting;—the beasts shall rest and graze in the thicket awhile. They have had a long spell of it, 'faith; yet my anxiety to get to Knaresbro'—my encounter with the robbers, by laying me up at York, has been the means of obtaining me information I might not otherwise have gained.

Bunt. Odd fish, that father of your's, your honour; mean no offence. Strange dog—seems to have known the world, though, by getting that Colonel Elmore to leave him a thousand pounds. Dare say he and the money both gone long before this. What's a thousand pounds to him?—a flea-bite—baugh!

Wal. From the Colonel's solicitor I have discovered that the steward of the family has retired to a small public-house, the "Raven," near St. Robert's Cave, at Knaresbro'!—he knows all the transactions of the family, and can doubtlessly give me some further information of the fate of my eccentric father.

Bunt. His fate's easily guessed, your honour. Brandy fever—watch-house rheumatism—parish church-yard—Smith on the tombstone,—know what's what, your honour—depend on't, it will turn out so;—no use looking any further,—man like him live to this time!—baugh!

Wal. I do not think so;—reach Knaresbro' I must and will to-night!—Let us set off at once—the beasts must be refreshed by this time.

Bunt. Refreshed, your honour!—baugh!—what's a few nibbles of grass?—not enough to clean their teeth;—as well think to refresh me with half a pint of small, that have a two-quart stomach; better give 'em ten minutes more, save fifty by it in the long run—man of the world, sir—catch me wrong—Corporal Bunting wrong?—baugh!

Bess. [aside.] I've heard enough to weave a story from, shall seem like gospel. [coming forward.] Save you, good gentlemen—handsome sir, cross the poor gipsy's hand with a bit of silver, and have your fortune told.

[to Walter,

Bunt. Baugh!—all humbug!—I say it—man of the world—know what's what!

Wal. I am not so worldly wise, Bunting, and if we must dally ten minutes, we may as well occupy it in this way as any other; though I know what the prediction will be:—heiress—blue eyes—seven children—troubles over at forty-three—healthy old age—plenty of money, and comfortable death.—There, Sybil; now then a good shilling's worth.

[*gives money.*]

Hum. Hum! a fair palm, young stranger, but yet crossed;—you are a seeker—'tis an ill night for them that seek, and for them that ask. *He's about.*

Wal. He!—who?

Bess. No matter—you may be successful, young sir, yet wish you had not been so;—the moon thus, and the wind there, promise you will get your desires, and find them curses.

Bunt. Baugh!—all humbug! as I said before;—but eh! what hangbird have we coming here in such a devil of a hurry?—some of that old beldam's gang, I dare say;—we shall all have our throats cut before we know where we are; but they slan't surprise me in that manner—catch Corporal Bunting off his guard!—baugh!

Enter HOUSEMAN, hastily, r.

House. Curse of heaven on the beast! to fail foot in a moment like this! Hark'ye, you old she devil, and you sirs, is there any nearer road to Knaresbro' than by this route?

Bess. Eh! to Knaresbro'!—Richard the dare devil! and what does the raniping bird want in his old nest again?—what golden eggs has he in view? Why I haven't seen you these fourteen years, never since—

House. Peace, hag! Bess Airlie!—I must cut. [*aside.*]

Bess. Well, you needn't be so cross about it;—we have served one another ere now, therefore welcome back to Yorkshire, my ben cove.

House. Hum! your welcome's like the owl's, and reads the wrong way—but I cannot lag to patter—my business is of life and death!

Bess. As it ever has been, or there's no truth in prophecy!

House. Jezebel! but I must away,—my Jane—my pretty Jane! Ha! horses in yonder thicket!

Bunt. As sure as I'm born, that sy'ow's the very

fellow that went to see Master Aram at Grassdale. I say nothing—man of the world—two of a trade—augh! bother—waugh!

Wal. Strange indeed!—Methinks I recognize his features somewhere.

House. Curse on the mare!—’tis the first time she’s faltered, in all my needs; yet it may be repaired—this stranger—are you, sir, a father?

Wal. I’m not.—What means he?—Methinks that I could almost swear this is one of the very villains that so late attacked me; brief as was the opportunity, fearful as was the chance, I cannot be mistaken. [aside.

House. Oh it’s a bitter gnawing state of mind,—suspense! suspense too for a child;—A child! I know not if I have a child or no!—I may but reach Knaresbro’ to find my only daughter dead—aye, dead, sir.

Wal. Nay, I hope not.

House. Do you—do you? Thanks, thanks for that!—good wishes, sir, when trouble’s very deep, are something. I’ve ridden far,—my horse is now knocked up; I haste to see a dying daughter—ere now, perhaps, my child may breathe her last!

Bunt. All humbug!—don’t believe him, sir—take my advice;—he have a child?—baugh!

House. He does not offer. I need not have asked if you had been a father!—had you been one, you would have had compassion on me;—ere this you would have lent your horse to me!—mine halts in yonder dell.

Wal. I do not want compassion! But you will recollect you are a stranger, sir; it is not to the tale of every stranger a prudent man should give belief.

House. Ha! belief?—my story doubted? Well, well, no matter; there was a time, sir, when I should have forced that which I now solicit! but my heart is gone, sir! Keep your horse, and may the curse—

Wal. Stay, if I could believe your statement—but no. Mark me, sir; I have reasons, aye, fearful reasons, for suspecting that this is meant but as a snare!

House. What, have we met before then?

Wal. Or I am much mistaken.

House. And I’ve ill-used you?—it may be so—it may be; but were the grave before me, and if one lie would smite me into it, what I now utter is the naked truth!

Wal. Hum! Hark’ye, sir; if you are the man I take you for, you once lifted up your voice against the mur-

der, though you assisted in the robbery of a traveller—that traveller was myself! I will remember the mercy—I will forget the outrage, and will not believe that you have devised this story as a snare;—take my horse, sir; I will trust you.

Bunt. Wheugh! tol, lol, de diddle, diddle!

House. Hey! trust me! I then may be in time. I don't ask God to bless you!—a blessing from my mouth would be a curse!—but you will not repent this—no, you will not repent it. I am a villain—have a villain's heart; still I am a father—have a father's feelings! I thank you, sir—I thank you! Now, now for Knaresbro'—my Jane—my pretty Jane, I come!—thy father comes to save thee, aye, at any sacrifice! [rushes off, L.]

Bunt. There's two hundred weight of good dog's meat gone off in a canter!—Didn't ask me for *my* horse, the 'scape gallows!—think I'd have been such a flat—baugh!

Bess. He seems in trouble, Dick, or he wouldn't have slighted an old acquaintance in this manner. A wild fellow, sir,—many a good swag of plate have I made into a white soup and brown gravy for him,—there was all the silver Hindy images, fourteen years ago—

Wal. Ha! can it be!—strange—strange—I will away to Knaresbro' at once, and lose no further time; night else may come. Now, Bunting, on to Knaresbro'! If the man's tale be true—should it be his child is really dying, and, through my means, he close her eyes—well, well, at least I'll hope it.

Bunt. Baugh!

Wal. Am I the instrument or sport of fate?—shall I discover this long missing father?—I feel—I feel I shall;—I have a deep assurance here which cannot, won't deceive me;—onwards to Knaresbro'!

Bunt. On a lame horse;—diddle, diddle, ri tum ti!

[*Exeunt omnes*, R.]

SCENE VI.—*Exterior of the Raven Ale-house and St. Robert's Cave, at Knaresbro';—the River Nid and Thistle Hill in the back ground. HAYWARD, SUMMERS, and INHABITANTS of Knaresbro' discovered carousing. LIPTRAP in attendance.*

⁵ To this desolate spot, called, from the name of its once celebrated eremite, St. Robert's Cave, the croud now swept."—NOVEL.

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Hay. Well said, well said; ne'er a merrier man in

all Knaresbro' than you are, Master Liptrap, though you do keep the Raven here. Here's success to the Raven! neighbours. [drinks.]

Omnès. Good, good;—success to the Raven!

[*all drink.*]

Lip. Thank'ye, thank'ye, friends. I can't grumble, faith—I set up this house to entertain the many strangers that come to visit our piece of antiquity, St. Robert's Cave here! there being no other house about; and ecod, whether it's owing to the goodness of my jokes or my ale, I don't know, but I've half Knaresbro' for customers.

Sun. Well, the more the merrier;—hey! here's some more coming now!—Visitors it seems;—I don't remember to have seen them before.

Enter WALTER and BUNTING, L.

Bunt. Yes, this is the place, sir;—the Raven sure enough; and that man with the green baize round his middle must be the landlord. Well, while you're getting your information, I'll be getting a mug of ale, and what not;—man of the world—can't live upon air—I'm not in love!—love—baugh!

Wal. I cannot restrain my impatience!—Your name is Liptrap, I believe, sir?—pardon my abruptness—I have a motive, aye, a strong one: do you happen to remember the circumstance of a Mr. Clarke visiting this town, and leaving it as suddenly?

Lip. Remember it!—aye, to be sure I do,—made a great noise at the time—folks talked of some foul play—

Wal. Ha!

Lip. Yes, I certainly have my suspicions;—but no matter—

Wal. Foul play!—suspicions!—Speak on, sir, I implore you!—I have come hither purposely to learn;—you will oblige me more than I can mention;—he is or was a most near relative.

Lip. Indeed! Well, then, did you ever happen to hear of one Richard Houseman?

Wal. Ah! what of him?

Lip. Why, I wouldn't wish to accuse any body wrongfully, but I certainly have my thoughts that Houseman murdered him.

Wal. Murdered him!—merciful heavens! my poor ill-fated—Go on, sir; pray go on!—heed not my agony; heed me not, I conjure you!—go on, for mercy's sake!

Lip. You must know, sir, Clarke had received a legacy of a thousand pounds, which he laid out in plate and jewels, with other valuables that he borrowed and got credit for. His chief associate, for he loved riotous company, was Richard Houseman, a scape-grace fellow, though he'd good relations, young Eugene Aram—

Wal. Aram! and mixed up with my father! What horrid thought is this steals o'er me? [aside.]

Lip. The night Clarke disappeared, I had been visiting, and came home late;—on my return, just entering the town, and near this spot, I met Clarke and this Houseman—that was the last time Clarke was ever seen.

Wal. Was Houseman not examined?

Lip. Oh yes, but nothing came of it;—he said that he left Clarke, and spent the evening with Eugene Aram.

Wal. Aram, the intimate of this abandoned, this suspected Houseman! Was he not taken up too?

Lip. Oh no; nobody suspected him—his character was too well known for that; to be sure the woman at whose house he lodged has been leard to hint, once or twice, she knew that which would hang him; but it was in her cups, and she's a cankerous jade.

Wal. This woman I must speak with;—well, sir—

Lip. It was supposed that Clarke was gone off with the property to cheat his creditors,—Houseman was discharged, and left the country, and shortly after Eugene Aram followed; and thus the matter dropt.

Sum. Talking of Houseman, I saw him enter the town just now; he came to see his little child, poor Jane, and was but just in time—she died within his arms!—He takes on sadly.

Hay. Hist! here he comes.

Lip. Who?

Hay. Why Houseman, himself.

Lip. How desperate he looks,—his loss has crazed him;—we must forget his crimes in his distress.

Wal. Ha! the villain that attacked me, but who shrunk from murder!—the visitor of Aram, too, at Grassdale—he, he this Houseman! I'll keep an eagle glance upon him.

Enter HOUSEMAN, L.

House. My pretty Jane!—hags, that suffered her to die!—why sent they not to London for physicians?—was I not rich enough to buy my poor child's life at any price? I would have coined their very bodies into gold,

ould it have saved her!—But she is *dead!* and I—Brandy, brandy here, I say!

Lip. Be comforted;—here is liquor!—Your loss, I own, is great, but—

House. Ha! where am I?—at the Raven?—well, it can croak a welcome to me; aye, I come from the dead! And—what is this?—*St. Robert's Cave!*—Aye, aye, 'tis plain that grief has blinded me, or I had ne'er come here. Who built this house here, to watch over that spot—that gloomy, cursed cave?—there was no house here once; no, all was lone, was secret, unfrequented!

Lip. He raves, poor fellow.

House. Well, well;—what is't you glare at, neighbours?—think you I am some monster?—no, no, I have a heart;—I've lost my child, and I am stricken down!—Brandy, brandy here, I say! [retires to back and drinks.

Enter TEBBUTT, R.

Teb. Hey, bless me, Master Summers!—well, have you heard the news? Heard the news, neighbour Hayward?

Hay. No—what is it?

Teb. Why, Jem Ninnings, digging for stone for the lime kiln on Thistle Hill there, ha' dug up a big wooden chest wi' a skeleton in it.

Wal. Ha! a skeleton?

Sum. As sure as you are born, neighbours, it's the Jew pedlar's that disappeared about fourteen years ago.

Hay. Pooh! nonsense! it's more like to be Daniel Clarke's.

Wal. Daniel Clarke's!

Lip. Aye, aye; right, right—no doubt it is Daniel Clarke's.

House. Daniel Clarke!—why do they rake him up at such an hour?—why not let him repose in peace?—Where was it found, say you? [coming forward.

Teb. On Thistle Hill.

House. Thistle Hill!—fools, fools! Daniel Clarke's bones don't lie there;—that's no more Clarke's skeleton than it's mine! You must look nearer home.

Wal. Ha! Clarke's bones not there!—look nearer home!—villain! out of thy own mouth will I convict thee! Behold! behold the murderer! [seizes Houseman.] the murderer of my—that is, Clarke!

Omnes. Murderer!—seize him! [Houseman is seized]

House. Eh! murderer!—I murderer!—murderer o-

whom? I only said those were not Clarke's bones!—that Clarke's bones don't lie there.

Wal. Where, then, *do they lie?*—you know, and I will tear the secret from your heart, but I will have it!

House. Eh! I!—ah! trapped at last!—I—I—must it then out?—well, search St. Robert's Cave—the turn there in the entrance.

Wal. Eternal providence!

Lip. A spade!—a spade!

Wal. Ave. to the cave—the cave!—dig, dig!—hold tight the villain!—let him not escape!—now, now—moment of horrible suspense!

[*Liptrap, Summers, and Hayward enter cave; Villagers get torches and spades; a pause.*

Re-enter Summers, &c.

Wal. Well, you have dug—have seen—have found—what, what? [*they produce a skull.*] That skull! my lost, my murdered father!

House. Yes, that's Clarke's scull safe enough!—that fracture did the business—'twas there the fatal blow was struck! but *I*, I did not do the deed!—no, no, *I'm* not themurderer!

Wal. Who is then, villain?—speak!—answer me!

House. Eugene Aram!

Omnis. Eugene Aram!

Wal. Ha! EUGENE ARAM! Merciful providence!

[*tableau.*

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Village of Grassdale, Rectory on one side, Church on the other, high road at the back; bells ringing for Aram's wedding, &c. MARGERY, DAME DARKMANS, and VILLAGE LADS and LASSES, in holiday dresses, discovered. The Villagers bearing garlands.*

"The Heaven of their fate seemed calm and glowing, and Aram did not dream that the one small cloud of fear which was set within it, and which he alone beheld afar and unprophetic of the storm, was charged with the thunderbolt of a doom he had protracted, not escaped."—NOVEL.

CHORUS.—VILLAGERS.

Sweetly sound the village bells,
When victory glads the nation,
Or of the heir, their greeting tells
The natal celebration.

Proclaiming peace, dispelling care,
 But oh ! what joy they're spreading,
 When thus, friends, of the good and fair,
 They're ringing for the wedding.

Sweetly sound the village bells,
 Announcing rest from labour ;
 And summoning, with holy knells,
 To worship, friend and neighbour ;
 Of holidays the news they bear,
 But oh ! what joy they're spreading,
 When thus, friends, of the good and fair,
 They're ringing for the wedding.

Dame D. Ah, wedding indeed ! you may save yourselves much trouble if you're wise, there be little need of garlands.

Mar. But the master likes them, Goody Darkmans. They says there is not a blade of grass he does not know ; he must be a good man to love the things of the field so.

Dame D. Ho, ho ! good—why Joe Wrench was hanged with a nosegay in his hand, and quarrelled with Jack Ketch because he hadn't a carnation in it ; good—ho, ho !

Mar. Mercy on us, Dame ! who talks of hanging on a marriage day ? but you're always prognosticating evil !

Dame D. I don't care ! many a blessing carries a curse in its arms, as the new moon carries the old. This won't be one of your happy weddings, I can tell you.

Mar. And why do you say that ?

Dame D. Did you ever see a man with a look like Eugene Aram's make a happy husband ?—no, no ! Can you fancy the merry laugh of children in this house, or the babe on the father's knee, or the happy still smile on the mother's winsome face some few years hence ? No, Madge, the deil has set his black claw on the man's brow, I tell you ; besides, I mind what I saw last night !

Mar. Eh ! what did you see last night ?

Dame D. Why, after I left you—'twas then nigh twelve—the moon was up, and I was going through the wood, when I saw something dark, creep—creep,—but ever so fast after me, over Fairleigh field, making a-head right to the village.

Mar. Mercy on us !

Dame D. I saw that it was not one thing, but many ; and they darkened the whole field before me. And what d'ye think they were ? an army of grey rats, thousands, all making from the master's buildings—for sure they knew, the witch things, that an ill luck sat on the spot.

Mar. It does, indeed, look like it, Dame. What did you do, in love's name?

Dame D. I stood aside, by the tree, and laughed as I saw the ugsome creatures sweep past me, tramp, tramp, tramp, not heeding me a jot; but some on 'em looked aslant at me, with their glittering eyes, and shewed their white teeth, as if they grinned, and were saying to me, "ha, ha! Goody Darkmans, the house that we leave is a falling house, for the devil will have his own!"

Mar. Lord bless us! well, I wish the marriage day was well over, with all my heart and soul; but hush! here the master comes! he does seem thoughtsome indeed.

Enter ARAM, R.—Margery and Villagers bow and courtesy.

Mar. Good-morrow to your honour! wish your honour joy, and much of it; and your fair bride, too!

Dame D. A happy day, master; a happy good morning!

Aram. Enough! enough, friends; thanks, and leave me!

Dame D. A wish—awish, to speak so to the poor! but the rats never lie, the bonny things; stand aside, neighbours; eh, what a gay bridegroom! [aside.]

[*Margery, Dame, and Villagers, draw back.*]

Aram. My marriage morning come, all is safe! he will not again return; the dead sleeps now without a witness. I may lay this working brain upon the bosom that loves me, and not start at night, and think that the soft hand around my neck, is the hangman's gripe! [bells heard.] What's that! my marriage bells? two short years back could I have dreamt of this? my marriage bells! Oh, Madeline, how wondrously beloved! how dear thou art to me!—No, no, never shall thou repent!—'Tis a dim morning! why this chill—this shiver in the midst of hope? strange—strange;—how my heart sinks! Well, the better sign—in danger it never sank! What's that?

Enter PETER DEALTRY.

Deal. I beg pardon, Mr. Aram, sir, but the time is near at hand, and the bride expecting. I hope you approve of the bells, and will like the epithalamium;—the singers are all perfect.

It is a joyful sight to see,
A pair in concord join'd.

Aram. Ha, have I played the laggard—is it so near, friend Dealtry?

Deal. It is indeed, your honour.

Then onward to the house of prayer,
All married for to be,
Walked sweetly forth this loving pair,
In blessed unity.

Yes, your honour, they are all ready, only want you and me. No marrying without the parson—and no parson without the clerk. The bride has just entered. 'Twill be indeed a day of revelry. I'll go and let them know you're in attendance.

Oh, 'tis a comely sight to see,
The bride in virgin white.

[*Exit into Rectory.*

Aram. Ten minutes more, and Madeline Lester's fate is joined with mine; then to forsake the bookman's life for ever! The seal is on the tomb—henceforth be the spectre laid! I will forget—forget!—aye, forget! 'tis a strange truth we *do* forget! The summer passes o'er the furrow—the corn springs up—the battle field forgets the blood that has been spilt upon its turf—the sky forgets the storm;—all nature speaks forgetfulness;—its very order is the progress of oblivion;—and I, I!—ha! ha! I forget too! They come! now—now! fate I defy thee!

Marriage procession enters from Rectory; organ strikes up in Church; Children and Villagers strewing flowers, Beadles with favours; the RECTOR and PETER DEALTRY; LESTER and MADELINE; Bridesmaids; ELLINOR, Servants, &c. The procession halts in the centre of stage; Lester advances to Aram and conducts him to Madeline.

EPITHALAMIUM.—OMNES.

Hail! happy, happy pair!
Thy presence glads all eyes;
Hail bride, thrice pure and fair!
Hail bridegroom, good and wise!
Life strew for thee its flowers,
Be thine earth's pleasant ways;
Joy gladden all thy hours,
And peace charm all thy days!
Hail! hail!

Les. Eugene, my son!—this moment needs me all life's crosses;—my cup of happiness is filled by this best union—I've nought now left to wish for. Bless you, my children!—come, to the church!—the church!

[*organ and bells strike up.*

Ell. Stay, stay ; I see a cloud of dust—a carriage is advancing—'tis Walter Lester!—he comes to bless your nuptials!

Aram. What wants he here?—on with the ceremony.

Ell. Nay, nay, a moment;—how rapidly he drives—he comes—he comes!—there's others with him—he's here!—see, he alights—'tis Walter! and,—great heavens, how pale!

Mad. What fearful men are these?

Enter WALTER, rushing in, R.—followed by officers.

Wal. Am I too late?—Silence those bells!—let not that organ's holy tones be heard in such a service! Are you yet free?—speak, Madeline!—speak, cousin!

Les. You are in time; but what foretells this wildness?

Wal. Thank heaven!—MURDERER! [advancing towards *Aram.*] Nay, touch him not—my hand shall seize him!

Aram. [aside.] At last! the accuser here!—well, still I have it to refute the charge. Hold! sir—by what authority do you commit this outrage?—for what am I arrested?

Wal. Behold our warrant! You are accused of murder!

Omnes. Murder!

Wal. Know you the name of *Richard Houseman*?—pause—consider,—or that of *Daniel Clarke*?

Aram. What mean these questions?—lead me to some authority, meet for me to answer!—for you, boy, my answer is contempt! Officers, I call upon you to discharge your duty;—if this be a rightful warrant, I am your prisoner—but I am not *this* man's! I claim, sirs, your protection.

Mad. What means all this?

Wal. My passion has misled me; violence is unworthy of my solemn cause;—God and justice, and not these hands, are my avengers!

Aram. Your avengers!—what dark words are these? This warrant accuses me of the murder of one *Daniel Clarke*!

Wal. Mark me, man! The name of *Daniel Clarke* was but a feigned one,—the real name was *Lester*—*Geoffrey Lester*—that murdered *Lester* was my father,—was his brother, whose daughter, had I not come to-day, you would have called your wife!

Aram. [aside.] It is a dreadful tale, if true!

Les. Here is some fell mistake. Eugene, my son—my son! I feel, I know that thou art innocent of this most monstrous crime!—I do not accuse you!—some sad delusion maddens this poor boy!—you, you? who would not hurt a worm—you murder?

Mad. I am awake now—’twas a fearful vision; cousin, Walter, can it be you, accusing Eugene Aram?—your Madeline’s betrothed husband? Madeline, whom you once loved—and of what?—of crimes which death alone can punish!—Away! it is not you—I know it is not!—Say that I am mistaken—that I am mad!—mad if you will! Come, Walter, relieve me!—say—say ‘tis false.—let me not abhor the very air you breathe.

Wal. Madeline! dear Madeline! have mercy on my agony!

Mad. Mercy!—you talk of mercy!—ah, I knew that it could not be true, that you could not have dreamt of wrong to my Eugene! and—and upon this day! Say you have erred, or we have erred, and we’ll forgive you even now?

Ell. Do, Walter—dearest Walter!

Wal. What can I say?—this trial—this oh this, I had not looked for!

Mad. Speak to me, Walter!—speak to me, dearest Walter!—are you, my cousin—you that were my play-fellow, are you the one to blight our hopes—to dash our joys—bring dread and terror to a home, so late all peace and sunshine?—to your own home, aye, to your childhood’s home?—What have you done?—what have you dared to do?—accuse him! and of what? murder!—Speak—speak—speak!—murder! No, no! not so,—you would not venture to come here!—you would not let me take your hand!—you would not look us, your uncle, your more than sisters in the face, if you could nurse in your heart this lie!—this black, this horrid lie!

Wal. Let him prove his innocence—pray God he do!—I’m not his accuser, Madeline;—his accusers are the bones of my dead father!—save these, heaven, alone, and the revealing earth, are witnesses against him!

Aram. All this is idle now. Leave me, dearest Madeline—leave me, my beloved wife that shall be, aye, that is!—I go to disprove these charges!—perhaps I shall return to-night!—delay not my acquittal even from a doubt—a boy’s doubt! Come, sirs.

Mad. Oh, Eugene! Eugene! [kneeling.] do not order

me to leave you now!—now in this hour of dread!—I will not!—nay, look not so—I swear I will not! Father, dear father, come and plead for me!—you weep, father—you shake your head;—but you, Eugene—you have not the heart to deny me? Think, think if I stayed here to count the moments till your return, my very sense would leave me!

Aram. Madeline!—Madeline!

Mad. What do I ask but to go with you?—to be the first to hail your triumph! Had this but happened a few moments hence, you could not have said nay—I should have had the right of being with you, and now I but implore it as a blessing!—Ha! do you consent?—yes, you consent—I see it!

Aram. Oh, God! this is indeed a bitter hour—let me not sink beneath it!—Yes, Madeline, I do—I do consent, if it so please your father! I hail your strengthening presence as an angel's;—I will not be the one to sever you from my side.

Les. Right, right, Eugene, she shall go with us!—it is but common kindness—common mercy!

Mad. Joy, joy!—aye, e'en in this dark hour!

Les. [to *Walter.*] Now then, come, sir;—your rashness has done sufficient wrong for the present. Come now, and see how soon your suspicions will end in shame!

Wal. Justice, and blood for blood!—I seek no more.

Ell. Oh, Walter, Walter, that it should come to this!—shut out from us for ever!

Aram. Gentlemen, I am ready. Come, Madeline, love,—my dear kind friend—my more than father; and you, my neighbours—doubt not of my return, bleached from this charge, and triumphing in acquittal!—On, on!—come, dearest—come, to—*Knaresborough!*

[*Shudderingly.*—*Exeunt Aram and Officers, with Madeline, Lester, Ellinor, Walter, Dealtry, &c.*]

SCENE II.—*Apartment in Lodging-House at Knaresbro'.*

“ It was the evening before the trial, Lester and his daughters lodged at a retired and solitary house in the suburbs of the town of York.”—NOVEL.

Enter JACOB BUNTING. L.

Bunt. Soh, young squire's got back to Knaresbro' at last, and brought old squire, and Miss Madeline, and Miss Ellinor, along with him—and what's more, master Aram! Who says I'm not a man of the world, now? that Cor-

poral Bunting don't know what's what, eh—baugh!—always said Master Aram was a black sheep, didn't think he was quite so bad as he is though!—Murder, faugh! killed many a stout fellow in the way of my profession myself—that is, firelock to firelock, and with both eyes shut; but in cold blood, baugh,—couldn't do that!—a thousand, in battle if you like! but not one elsewhere. Hum, here comes Miss Ellinor! fall back—deploy to the rear;—catch Corporal Bunting intruding—baugh!

[retires.]

Enter ELLINOR, R.

Ell. Yes, I must grant this interview! Poor Walter, though he has brought this woe upon us, I do not think but he would die—and gladly, for our love; fatal, fatal duty! that thus has forced him to blight all our hopes! This ill-starred Aram, they have committed him!—My father now is with him in the prison; ah, what a change for him and Madeline! so late all joy, and now—why did they ever meet?

Enter WALTER, L.

Wal. Ellinor!

Ell. Walter!

Wal. This, this is kind! is like my own dear Ellinor!

Ell. Oh, Walter, Walter! would you had never left us!

Wal. Rather say, would that this unhappy man, on whom my father's ashes still seem to me to cry aloud for vengeance, had never come into our happy valley, to mar our peace, and blight our joy; then you would not have to reproach me that I have sought justice on a suspected murderer! nor I to long for death, rather than, in that justice, inflict despair and horror on the hearts I love!

Ell. Do you then still believe—are you then still convinced that Aram is the real criminal?

Wal. Let the trial shew! But poor, poor Madeline! how does she bear this shock?

Ell. Oh, Walter, such a change!—though she bears up, I fear—the worst!

Wal. And providence has singled me, in the wide world, to strike this blow!—I must see her, Ellinor; yes, for the quiet of my soul I must! and win her pardon for the ills I've wrought her! What if Aram be condemned? and—and—I must! must see her!

Ell. She comes! unhappy Madeline!

Enter MADELINE, R.—pale, and apparently suffering.

Wal. Madeline! dearest Madeline! you whom while yet a boy I fondly—passionately loved! you, who yet are, and, while I live, will ever be most dear to me! Say, but one word to me in this dark crisis of our fate!—Say but you feel a consciousness—that through these terrible events *I* have not been to blame—I have not willingly brought this dread anguish on our house! nor, least of all, upon that heart which mine would willingly have shed its blood to shield;—say this! and I will bless you! or, if this justice be refused me, say, say at least that you forgive me, Madeline!

Mad. I do forgive you, Walter;—yes, I do you justice, my cousin;—the mere and passive instrument of fate, why should I blame you? No, no, you too are stricken! God bless you, my dear cousin! Why do you look so at me, Ellinor?—I am not mad! although I well might be; look at me! I am calm, collected;—yet, this trial, oh, God! oh, God! if,—if— [covers her face with her hands.

Wal. Moment of bitterness! Oh! the gall I drink in those deep tears,—Madeline! Madeline!

Mad. Oh, Walter, I am wearing fast away! Thank HIM who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, we cannot be divided long;—ere another day be fleeted, we may meet. What cause then have we of regret? a few short hours!—What triumph? or, to me, at least—what peace? My father!

Enter LESTER, R.

Les. Bless thee, my suffering child!

Mad. Well—you have seen him; say—how does he? how looks he, father? But well I know his brave heart will not shrink! Sends he no message to me?—And the trial! ah, tell me all, my father!

Les. We must set forth at once, the trial will take place immediately! We must take courage, aye, and comfort too, from him, girl; oh, what a gallant heart, a noble spirit! and yet a chance may—but I will not dream it;—no, heaven will be just! and let the avenging lightnings fall on the criminal, and not blast the innocent!

Mad. [deeply.] Amen!

Wal. Amen! aye, from my soul! I must away to my stern duty. Farewell, Madeline has forgiven me, and in that thought is solace. Farewell, all I have ever loved!

though from my hand this anguish comes ; think not too harshly, but be time—the judge ! [*kisses the hands of Madeline and Ellinor, then advances towards Lester.*] Uncle !

[extending his hand.]

Les. [taking it.] Walter ! heaven pardon thee ! heaven pardon thee ! [*overpowered with excess of emotion, Walter rushes off.*]

Mad. Poor Walter, to crush her he so loved ! Let us away, my father ;—’tis in my wedding dress that I will go ; I will but bid all here farewell. Now then, ere we depart, one word ;—father, sister—you ever have been kind in this most bitter anguish ; Ellinor—sister, playmate, comforter and confident, when all is past, and I am gone, may you be happy—and you my father, my friend, my all ! Oh, when of your poor Madeline there’s left but the sad memory, may you find some one to watch o’er you, tend you, shield your grey hairs from sorrow, and smooth your dying pillow—as once I thought the task would have been mine.

Les. My child ! my child !

Mad. Give me your blessing ! Say, if ever I have unconsciously bestowed a pang upon you ! oh, lay your hand upon my head, and say I am forgiven !

Les. Forgiven ? angel that thou art ! But come, be comforted, be cheered ; who knows but Heaven may have reserved its crowning triumph for this day, and Eugene be amongst us—ere the night—acquitted and triumphant !

Mad. Ha, should it be so ! should it be so ! oh, let us haste to find your promise true ! yes, I am ready now ; come, come !

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE III.—*Exterior of the Sessions House, Constables guarding the doors ; populace at the window ; SUMMERS, HAYWARD, and TEBBUTT, discovered.*

" The third of August, 1759, rose bright, calm, and clear ; it was the morning of the trial."—NOVEL.

Sum. We are too late—the hall’s completely crowded,—half York is there !

Hay. ’Twas stopping at the Raven. Well, I still think that Aram isn’t guilty, but that the villain Houseman has merely made this charge to save himself.

Sum. I don’t think any such thing,—look at the other evidence ; they are both in it, I tell you,—and so it will be found.

Hay. Hush ! here comes the lady Aram was to have

married ; she's with her father ! How pale she looks ; poor lady, poor lady,—this is a fearful time for her. Let us stand back, and give them way.

[*Hayward, Summers, &c. draw back.*

Enter LESTER, MADELINE, and ELLINOR.

Les. Let me entreat you enter not the court, remain with thy old father. Ellinor, from those steps, can witness all that passes, and give us the first tidings ;—Heaven grant they be of joy !

Ell. Aye, dearest Madeline, let me be the messenger.

Mad. Do with me as you will, I am prepared for all.

Con. The trial is commencing, the judge is now upon the bench.

Ell. [*rushing up steps, leaving Lester supporting Madeline in one corner of the stage.*] Ha ! yes, yes, Eugene is entering the court ! all eyes are fixed upon him ! how noble is his air ! how firm his step !

Mad. It is the strength of innocence !

Ell. They're reading the indictment—he is arraigned—he pleads not guilty !

Mad. And at heaven's judgment seat—I, with my soul, would answer for his truth !

Ell. They call the witnesses ! Ha, the villain Houseman !

Mad. Oh, that I had the lightning's power to sear the lie that quivers on his lip !

Ell. How guilty-like he seems—the court are shuddering ! they turn aside—as from a thing infected ;—he dares not face Eugene ! He hangs his head!—the villain hangs his head !

Mad. Well,—and Eugene, dear girl !

Ell. Still bears up nobly, and smiles at him in scorn. Oh, 'tis a horrid tale that he is telling ! A horrid, horrid tale !

Les. Perjured assassin !

Mad. They will destroy him ! destroy the good—the noble !—lost, sacrificed Eugene ! Oh, for a thunderbolt to blight the Judas ! What now—what now, dear Ellinor ?

Ell. Eugene is called upon for his defence !

Mad. Ha !

Ell. The court is still as death. He speaks ! all eyes are brightening ! he answers all their charges. Oh, what a gaze of admiration follow every word ;—the jury look convinced !

Mad. I knew, I knew it ! if music be not hateful,—if

truth and virtue be not crimes, they will acquit him, aye, acquit him !

Ell. That murmur in the court ! 'tis of approval—'tis of approval ! he must, he will be saved !

Les. Thank heaven—thank heaven !

Mud. And did you ever doubt it ? Oh, I never did—save in a dream once;—oh, a horrid dream ! and then I saw the scaffold—and the crowd.—What now?—what now, dear Ellinor ? surely they cannot hesitate ?

Ell. The judge is summing up—a hard stern man—he looks incredulously,—they droop their heads—the jury pause !

Mad. Well, but Eugene ?

Ell. He still bears up, looks confident and noble.

Mad. Then all is safe !

Ell. The jury have retired !—ha ! they return !

Mad. The verdict ?

Les. Aye, the verdict ?

Ell. Ha ! that black cap !

Mad. [rushing to steps.] The verdict, girl—the verdict ?

Wal. [appearing at door.] GUILTY !

[*Madeline shrieks, and falls into Lester's arms.*

SCENE IV.—*The Condemned Cell.*

Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
And one with a heavy stone ;
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,
And then the deed was done !

T. HOOD.

Enter ARAM, R.—in chains.

Aram. 'Tis done !—the hand of time hath reached the hour of doom on vengeance' dial!—for the first time these fourteen years I now feel wholly calm. The restless bodings, that ever stirred within my heart, of this dread hour are now all stilled in certainty ! Oh, life has been to me a weary troublous journey ;—I hail the coming of that last deep sleep that will close all !—But Madeline—ah ! let me not unman myself ;—no ! Eugene Aram must die as he has lived—slave of his will, and master of his feelings !

Enter GAOLER, L.

Gaoler. Prisoner, your prosecutor would speak with you.

Aram. Ha ! comes he then to triumph o'er me ? No matter, I will see him.

Your friends, too, wait without their final

iv.

Aram. I am prepared for all ;—be iron, heart ! [aside.
[Exit Gaoler, L.]

Enter WALTER, L.

Now, sir—your business ?—time is short with me, and I have much to do.

Wal. Eugene Aram, I entreat—I implore you, if it be within your power, to lift from off my heart a load that weighs it to the dust. Your hours are numbered —there is no hope of pardon or reprieve ;—if to the doing of the dreadful act for which you suffer you have been led, no matter by what cause, oh whisper but one word, and I, the sole child of the murdered man—I will forgive you from the bottom of my soul !

Aram. What would you have of me?—speak—speak !

Wal. If you be innocent, think what a dreadful memory is left me ! Be merciful then, Aram. If the father's death came from you, should you make a burthen of the son's life too ?

Aram. Go on—go on.

Wal. If at this moment you can lay your hand upon your heart, and say before heaven, and at the peril of your soul, you are innocent of the deed, I will believe you ; but if you cannot, at so dark a crisis, take that oath, be just—be generous e'en in guilt ; nor let me through life be haunted thus by the fell spectre of a ghastly doubt !

Aram. Walter Lester, I had thought to have quitted life and leave my tale untold, but you have not appealed to me in vain—I tear the *self* from my heart !—I renounce the last haughty dream in which I wrapped myself from the ills around me. You shall know all—and judge in mercy ; but till my Madeline's death confide the tale to none!—that swear !

Wal. I do, most solemnly !

Aram. Listen then. I am a murderer !—I was in poverty and pride steeped to my very lips !—I yearned for knowledge, but had no means to feed that glorious yearning !—this Clarke was wealthy—aye, and though your father, worthless !—the devil Houseman tempted me, and one fell night, when warmed with wine, and taunted with my poverty, aye, by that reckless Clarke, I laid him at my feet !—Houseman lied in court—my right hand struck

him, but did not deal the *death blow!*—yet, time forth, have I never given, to living thing, the right hand, in pledge of love or fellowship;—the memory still clung to it, and withered up its strength.—the rest you know. And now then, Walter Lester, to your father's murderer, accord that pardon one man may grant another!

Wal. I do most freely!

Aram. 'Tis well, and in the day that for you brings the death that now awaits me, be that forgiveness granted to yourself. Now then, farewell for ever!—my friends await me,—Madeline—I will see her alone,—the others will await my summons.

Wal. It shall be so. Farewell!

[Walter retires to door, affectionately leads in Madeline, and exits.

Aram. Madeline!—dear Madeline!

Mad. Aye, Aram, I have come to tell you that I never felt how deeply I—I love you, till now, that all, aye, all the world have left you!

Aram. Love unto death!—Say those sweet words again!—say them, my Madeline!

Mad. I do—I do!

Aram. Then come the worst!—I now can meet it gladly.

Mad. We shall not long be separated, love!—When, when do we part to meet in heaven?

Aram. The bell will give the warning!

Mad. I have been with you there already!—and oh, Eugene! there are green fields and lulling waters there as we have here; and then we see the stars quite near too, and oh they beam such happiness on those around them! We shall be married there, love—how glad I am, we were not wed before!—see, I have got my bridal dress on! But we must part, for I must hasten to my marriage home; yes, I must go *before you*, love!—One kiss—our last on earth!

Aram. Angel!—but it is well!—yes, she should die—she, *she* is sure of heaven! Farewell! farewell! fare well!

[they embrace—death bell tolls

Mad. Ha!

[falls dead at Aram's feet.

Aram. Dead! dead!—thanks be to heaven, but one task more is left me!—Yes, as the men of old wisdom drew their garments around their faces, and sat down co-

lectedly to die, I wrapt myself in the settled resignation of a soul firm to the last ; and—taking not from man's vengeance even the method of its dismissal!—the courses of my life I swayed with my own hand, and from my own hand shall come the manner and moment of my death ! [bell tolls.] Let me be quick ! Come forth, thou treble poison—thou concentrated death ! long since stored for this moment, [swallows poison.] Now, in two minutes I shall pass earth's bounds ! Without there !

Enter ELLINOR, WALTER, and LESTER. L.

Behold ! [pointing to Madeline.] Walter, I know on my confession depends your hope of union with poor Ellinor ! You may reveal it. [joins their hands.]

Enter GAOLER and OFFICER. L.

Gaol. The sheriffs, sir, are waiting.

Aram. Ha ! but I foil them—this faintness !—I am ready,—I have been no common criminal ;—Eugene Aram renders to the scaffold ! his—*lifeless* body—pardon—pity—all ! [bell tolls, Aram dies.—Tableau.—The curtain falls.]

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

Officers.

Gaoler.

[R.]

Lester.

Aram.

Madeline.

Ellinor.

Officers.

Walter.

[L.]

THE END.





